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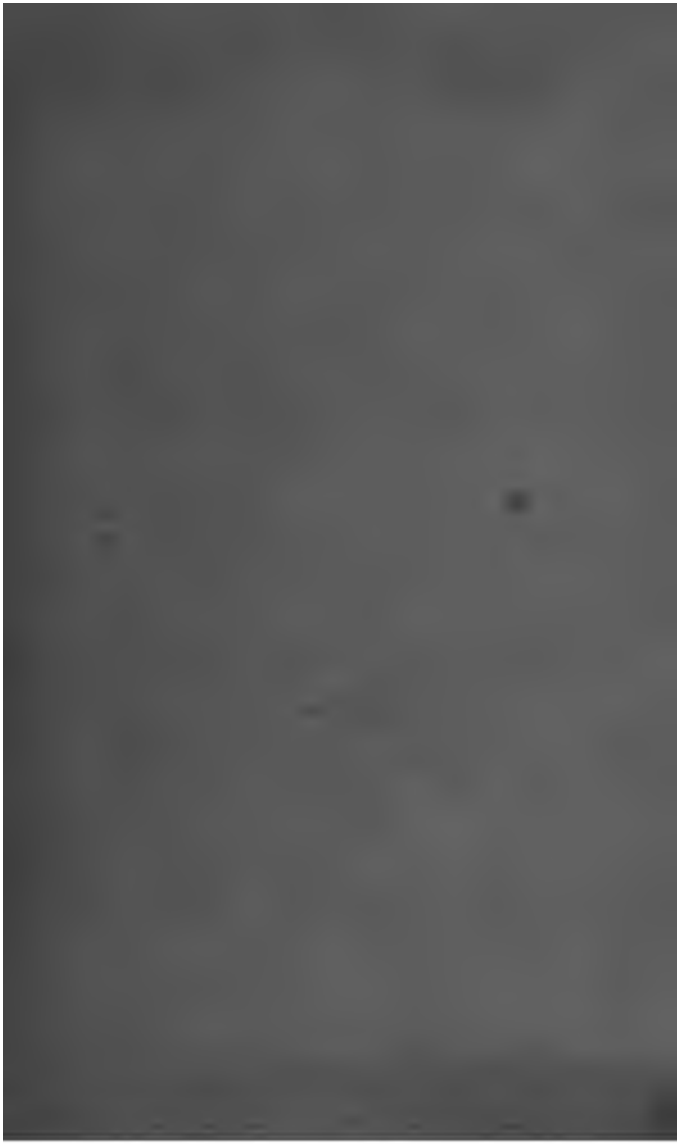

DR. JOHNSON'S TABLE-TALK:

CONTAINING

APHORISMS

ON

LITERATURE, LIFE, AND MANNERS;

WITH

ANECDOTES,

OF

DISTINGUISHED PERSONS:

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

FROM

MR. BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

He that questioneth much shall learn much, and content much; but especially if he apply his questions to the skill of the persons whom he asketh: for he shall give them occasion to please themselves in speaking, and himself shall continually gather knowledge.

Bacon's Essays.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MAWMAN; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; VERNOR, HOOD, AND SHARPE; AND WILSON AND SPENCE, YORK.

1807.

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TABLE TALK.

CONVERSATION.

JOHNSON's usual phrase for conversation was *talk;* yet he made a distinction; for having once dined at a friend's house with what he termed "a very pretty company," and being asked if there was good conversation, he answered, "No, Sir; we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation;* there was nothing *discussed.*"

He had a great aversion to gesticulation in company, and called once to a gentleman who offended him in that point, "Don't *attitudenise.*" When another gentleman thought he was giving additional force to what he uttered, by expressive movements of his hands, Johnson fairly seized them, and held them down.

He also disapproved of introducing scripture phrases into secular discourse.

Mr. Boswell having on some occasion observed, that he thought it right to tell one man of a handsome thing which had been said of him by another, as tending to increase benevolence, Johnson answered, "Undoubtedly it is right, Sir."

He thus defined the difference between physical and moral truth: "Physical truth is, when you tell a thing as it actually is. Moral truth is, when you tell a thing sincerely and precisely as it appears to you. I say such a one walked across the street; if he really did so, I told a physical truth. If I thought so, though I should have been mistaken, I told a moral truth."

"A man," he said, "should be careful never to tell tales of himself to his own disadvantage. People may be amused and laugh at the time; but they will be remembered, and brought out against him upon some subsequent occasion."

At another time he observed, "A man cannot with propriety speak of himself, except he relates simple facts; as, 'I was at Richmond:' or what depends on mensuration; as, 'I am six feet high.' He is sure he has been at Richmond; he is sure he is six feet high: but he cannot be sure he is wise, or that he has any other excellence. Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to shew how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood." Mr. Boswell however re-

marks, that this may sometimes proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed. He knows that others would throw him down, and therefore he had better lie down softly of his own accord.

Johnson used also to say, that if a man *talked* of his misfortunes, we might depend upon it there was something in them not disagreeable to him—for where there was nothing but pure misery, there never was any recourse to the mention of it.

Talking of an acquaintance, whose narratives, which abounded in curious and interesting topics, were unhappily found to be very fabulous, Mr. B. mentioned Lord Mansfield's having said, "Suppose we believe one *half* of what he tells."—"Aye," said Johnson, "but we don't know *which* half to believe. By his lying we lose not only our reverence for him, but all comfort in his conversation."

Speaking of conversation, he said, "There must, in the first place, be knowledge, and there must be materials; in the second place, there must be a command of words; in the third place, there must be imagination, to place things in such views as they are not commonly seen in; and, in the fourth place, there must be presence of mind, and a resolution that is not to be overcome by failures: this last is an essential requisite; for want of it many people do not excel in conversa-

tion. Now I want it: I throw up the game upon losing a trick *."

Of Charles Fox Johnson said, "Fox never talks in private company; not from any determination not to talk, but because he has not got the first motion. A man who is used to the applause of the House of Commons has no wish for that of a private company. A man accustomed to throw for a thousand pounds, if set down to throw for sixpence, would not be at the pains to count his dice. Burke's talk is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full."

After musing for some time one day, Johnson said, "I wonder how I should have any enemies; for I do harm to nobody."—BOSWELL. "In the first place, Sir, you will be pleased to recollect, that you set out with attacking the Scotch; so you got a whole nation for your enemies."—JOHNSON. "Why, I own, that by my definition of *oats* I meant to vex them."—BOSWELL. "Pray, Sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the Scotch?"—*J.* "I cannot, Sir."—*B.* "Old Mr.

* "I wondered (says Mr. B.) to hear him talk thus of himself, and said, 'I don't know, Sir, how this may be; but I am sure you beat other people's cards out of their hands.' I doubt whether he heard this remark. While he went on talking triumphantly, I was fixed in admiration, and said to Mrs. Thrale, 'O, for short-hand to take this down!'—'You'll carry it all in your head (said she); a long head is as good as short-hand."

Sheridan says, it was because they sold Charles the First."—*J.* "Then, Sir, old Mr. Sheridan found out a very good reason."

He once took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation (said he) must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth which a man gets thus are at such a distance from each other, that he never attains to a full view."

His acute observation of human life made him remark, "that there was nothing by which a man exasperated most people more, than by displaying a superior ability or brilliancy in conversation. They seem pleased at the time; but their envy makes them curse him in their hearts."

"Having once visited him on a Good Friday (says Mr. B.), and finding that we insensibly fell into a train of ridicule upon the foibles of one of our friends, a very worthy man; I, by way of a check, quoted some good admonition from "The Government of the Tongue," that very pious book. It happened also remarkably enough, that the subject of the sermon preached

to us by Dr. Burrows, the rector of St. Clement Danes, was, the certainty that at the last day we must give an account of "the deeds done in the body;" and amongst various acts of culpability, he mentioned evil-speaking. As we were moving slowly along in the crowd from church, Johnson jogged my elbow, and said, "Did you attend to the sermon?"—"Yes, Sir (said I), it was very applicable to *us*." He, however, stood upon the defensive.—"Why, Sir, the sense of ridicule is given us, and may be lawfully used. The author of 'The Government of the Tongue' would have us treat all men alike."

"To be contradicted (he observed) in order to force you to talk, is mighty unpleasing. You *shine*, indeed; but it is by being *ground*."

Mr. Boswell one day unguardedly said to Dr. J. "I wish I could see you and Mrs. Macaulay together." He grew very angry: and, after a pause, while a cloud gathered on his brow, he burst out, "No, Sir; you would not see us quarrel to make you sport. Don't you know that it is very uncivil to *pit* two people against one another?" Then checking himself, and wishing to be more gentle, he added, "I do not say you should be hanged or drowned for this; but it *is* very uncivil." Dr. Taylor (who was present) thought him in the wrong, and spoke to him privately of it; "yet (says Mr. B.) I afterwards acknowledged to Johnson

that I was to blame; for I candidly owned, that I meant to express a desire to see a contest between Mrs. Macaulay and him; but then I knew how the contest would end; so that I was to see him triumph."—JOHNSON. "Sir, you cannot be sure how a contest will end; and no man has a right to engage two people in a dispute by which their passions may be inflamed, and they may part with bitter resentment against each other. I would sooner keep company with a man from whom I must guard my pockets, than with a man who contrives to bring me into a dispute with somebody that he may hear it. This is the great fault of —— (naming one of our friends) endeavouring to introduce a subject upon which he knows two people in the company differ."—*B.* "But he told me, Sir, he does it for instruction." *J.* "Whatever the motive be, Sir, the man who does so does very wrong. He has no more right to instruct himself at such risk, than he has to make two people fight a duel, that he may learn how to defend himself."

Mr. B. ventured to mention a ludicrous paragraph in the news-papers, that Dr. J. was learning to dance of Vestris. Lord Charlemont, wishing to excite him to talk, proposed in a whisper, that he should be asked, whether it was true. "Shall I ask him?" said his Lordship. A great majority were for making the experiment. Upon

which his Lordship very gravely, and with a courteous air, said, "Pray, Sir, is it true that you are taking lessons of Vestris?" This was risking a good deal, and required the boldness of a General of Irish Volunteers to make the attempt. Johnson was at first startled, and in some heat answered, "How can your Lordship ask so simple a question?" But immediately recovering himself, whether from unwillingness to be deceived, or to appear deceived, or whether from real good humour, he kept up the joke: "Nay, but if any body were to answer the paragraph, and contradict it, I'd have a reply, and would say, that he who contradicted it was no friend either to Vestris or me. For why should not Dr. Johnson add to his other powers a little corporeal agility? Socrates learnt to dance at an advanced age, and Cato learnt Greek at an advanced age. Then it might proceed to say, that this Johnson, not content with dancing on the ground, might dance on the rope; and they might introduce the elephant dancing on the rope. A nobleman wrote a play, called 'Love in a Hollow Tree.' He found out that it was a bad one, and therefore wished to buy up all the copies, and burn them. The Duchess of Marlborough had kept one; and when he was against her at an election, she had a new edition of it printed, and prefixed to it, as a frontispiece, an elephant dancing on a

rope; to shew, that his Lordship's writing comedy was as awkward as an elephant dancing on a rope."

Johnson was, at a certain period of his life, a good deal with the Earl of Shelburne, now Marquis of Lansdown.

Maurice Morgan, Esq. author of the "Essay on the Character of Falstaff," being a particular friend of his Lordship, had once an opportunity of entertaining Johnson for a day or two at Wickham, when its Lord was absent. One night, pretty late, Mr. Morgan and he had a dispute in which Johnson would not give up, though he had the wrong side, and in short both kept the field. Next morning, when they met in the breakfasting-room, Dr. J. with great candour, accosted Mr. Morgan thus: "Sir, I have been thinking on our dispute last night—*You were in the right.*"

Sir Joshua Reynolds once observed to him, that he had talked above the capacity of some people with whom they had been in company together. "No matter, Sir (said Johnson), they consider it as a compliment to be talked to as if they were wiser than they are."

"There is nothing more likely to betray a man into absurdity than *condescension;* when he seems to suppose his understanding too powerful for his company."

"No man (he used to say) speaks concerning

another, even supposing it to be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear him, exactly as he would, if he thought he was within hearing."

"Never (said he) speak of a man in his own presence. It is always indelicate, and may be offensive."

Johnson could not brook appearing to be worsted in argument, even when, to show the force and dexterity of his talents, he had taken the wrong side. When, therefore, he perceived that his opponent gained ground, he had recourse to some sudden mode of robust sophistry. Once when Mr. B. was pressing upon him with visible advantage, he stopped him thus: "My dear B. let's have no more of this; you'll make nothing of it. I'd rather have you whistle a Scotch tune."

Care, however, must be taken to distinguish between Johnson when he "talked for victory," and Johnson when he had no desire but to inform and illustrate. "One of his principal talents (says an eminent friend of his) was shown in maintaining the wrong side of an argument, and in a splendid perversion of the truth. If you could contrive to have his fair opinion on a subject, and without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to be victorious in argument, it was wisdom itself, not only convincing, *but overpowering*."

He had, however, all his life habituated himself to consider conversation as a trial of intellectual vigour and skill; and to this may perhaps be ascribed that unexampled richness and brilliancy which appeared in his own. As a proof at once of his eagerness for colloquial distinction, and his high notion of this eminent friend, he once addressed him thus: "We now have been several hours together, and you have said but one thing for which I envied you."

He disliked much all speculative desponding considerations, which tended to discourage men from diligence and exertion. He was in this like Dr. Shaw, the great traveller, who used to say, "I hate a *cui bono* man." Upon being asked by a friend what he should think of a man who was apt to say *non est tanti?* "That he's a stupid fellow, Sir (answered Johnson). What would these *tanti* men be doing the while?" When one, in a low-spirited fit, was talking to him with indifference of the pursuits which generally engage us in a course of action, and inquiring a *reason* for taking so much trouble; "Sir, (said he in an animated tone) it is driving on the system of life."

Of his fellow collegian Mr. Edwards, with whom he had accidentally met after many years separation, he said, "Here is a man who has passed through life without experience; yet I

would rather have him with me than a more sensible man who will not talk readily. This man is always willing to say what he has to say." Yet (says Mr. B.) Dr. J. had himself by no means that willingness which he praised so much and so justly; for who has not felt the painful effect of the dreary void, when there is a total silence in a company for any length of time; or, which is as bad, or perhaps worse, when the conversation is with difficulty kept up by a perpetual effort?

He related, that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him. "Now (said he) one may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection; for had not my judgment failed me, I should have seen, that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me, as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character."

Of a certain player he remarked, that his conversation usually threatened and announced more than it performed; that he fed you with a continual renovation of hope, to end in a constant succession of disappointment.

When exasperated by contradiction, he was apt to treat his opponents with too much acrimony; as, "*Sir,* you don't see your way through

that question:"—"Sir, you talk the language of ignorance." On its being observed to him, that a certain gentleman had remained silent the whole evening in the midst of a very brilliant and learned society, "Sir (said he), the conversation overflowed and drowned him."

His philosophy, though austere and solemn, was by no means morose and cynical, and never blunted the laudable sensibilities of his character, or exempted him from the influence of the tender passions. Want of tenderness, he always alledged, was want of parts, and was no less a proof of stupidity than depravity.

Of Goldsmith he said, "He is so much afraid of being unnoticed, that he often talks merely lest you should forget that he is in company."—*B.* "Yes, he stands forward."—*J.* "True, Sir; but if a man is to stand forward, he should wish to do it not in an awkward posture, not in rags, not so as that he shall only be exposed to ridicule."—*B.* "For my part, I like very well to hear honest Goldsmith talk away carelessly."—*J.* "Why yes, Sir; but he should not like to hear himself."

At another time he said, "Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it; he is so much mortified when he fails. A game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance; a man may be beat at times by one who has not the

tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is like a man laying a hundred to one, who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him; he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation; if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed. The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small. As they say of a generous man, it is a pity he is not rich; we may say of Goldsmish, it is a pity he is not knowing. He would not keep his knowledge to himself."

Goldsmith said once to Dr. Johnson, that he wished for some additional members to the LITERARY CLUB, to give it an agreeable variety; "for (said he), there can now be nothing new among us: we have travelled over one another's minds." Johnson seemed a little angry, and said, "Sir, you have not travelled over *my* mind, I promise you." Sir Joshua Reynolds, however, thought Goldsmith right; observing that "when people have lived a great deal together, they know what each of them will say on every sub-

ject. A new understanding, therefore, is desirable; because though it may only furnish the same sense upon a question which would have been furnished by those with whom we are accustomed to live, yet this sense will have a different colouring; and colouring is of much effect in every thing else as well as in painting."

Mr. Berrenger visited Johnson one day, and they talked of an evening society for conversation at a house in town, of which (says Mr. B.) we were all members, but of which Johnson said, "It will never do, Sir. There is nothing served about there, neither tea, nor coffee, nor lemonade, nor any thing whatever; and depend upon it, Sir, a man does not like to go to a place from whence he comes out exactly as he went in." Mr. B. endeavoured, for argument's sake, to maintain, that men of learning and talents might have very good intellectual society, without the aid of any little gratifications of the senses. Berrenger joined with Johnson, and said, that without these any meeting would be dull and insipid. He would therefore have all the slight refreshments; nay, it would not be amiss to have some cold meat and a bottle of wine upon a side-board. "Sir (said Johnson, with an air of triumph), Mr. Berrenger knows the world. Every body loves to have good things furnished to them without any trouble. I told Mrs. Thrale once, that as she did

not choose to have card-tables, she should have a profusion of the best sweetmeats, and she would be sure to have company enough come to her*."

One evening, in fine spirits, at the Essex-Head-Club, he said, "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's, with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found; I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all."—BOSWELL. "What! had you them all to yourself, Sir?"—JOHNSON. "I had them all, as much as they were had; but it might have been better had there been more company there."—*B.* "Might not Mrs. Montagu have been a fourth?"—*J.* "Sir, Mrs. Montagu does not make a trade of her wit; but Mrs. Montagu is a very extraordinary woman, she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated; it has always meaning."—*B.* "Mr. Burke has a constant stream of conversation."—*J.* "Yes, Sir; if a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say this is an extraordinary man. If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse drest, the ostler would say we have had an

* "I agreed with my illustrious friend upon this subject (says his Biographer), for it has pleased GOD to make man a composite animal; and where there is nothing to refresh the body, the mind will languish."

extraordinary man here."—BOSWELL. "Foote was a man who never failed in conversation. If he had gone into a stable—"—JOHNSON. "Sir, if he had gone into a stable, the ostler would have said, here has been a comical fellow; but he would not have respected him.—*B.* "And, Sir, the ostler would have answered him, would have given him as good as he brought, as the common saying is."—*J.* "Yes, Sir; and Foote would have answered the ostler."

Mr. Boswell gave him an account of the excellent mimickry of a friend of his in Scotland; observing, at the same time, that some people thought it a very mean thing.—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, it is making a very mean use of a man's powers. But to be a good mimick requires great powers; great acuteness of observation, great retention of what is observed, and great pliancy of organs, to represent what is observed. I remember a lady of quality in this town, who was a wonderful mimick, and used to make me laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now gone mad."—BOSWELL. "It is amazing how a mimick can not only give you the gestures and voice of a person whom he represents, but even what a person would say on any particular subject."—*J.* "Why, Sir, you are to consider that the manner and some particular phrases of a person do much to impress you with an idea of him, and you are not sure

that he would say what the mimick says in his character."—*B.* "I don't think Foote a good mimick, Sir."—*J.* "No, Sir; his imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person unless he is strongly marked, such as George Faulkner. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who, therefore, is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. Foote is, however, very entertaining, with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery."

At another time he said, "Garrick's gaiety of conversation has delicacy and elegance; Foote makes you laugh more: but Foote has the air of a buffoon paid for entertaining the company. He, indeed, well deserves his hire."

Of Mr. Wilkes Johnson one day said, "Did we not hear so much said of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman. But after hearing his name sounded from pole to pole, as the phœnix of convivial felicity, we are disappointed in his company. He has always

been *at me;* but I would do Jack a kindness rather than not. The contest is now over."

"The value of every story (he said) depended on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general: if it be false, it is a picture of nothing. For instance: suppose a man should tell that Johnson, before setting out for Italy, as he had to cross the Alps, sat down to make himself wings. This many people would believe; but it would be a picture of nothing. ******* (naming a worthy friend of ours) used to think a story a story, till I shewed him that truth was essential to it."

"Questioning (he once remarked) is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen. It is assuming a superiority, and it is particularly wrong to question a man concerning himself. There may be parts of his former life which he may not wish to be made known to other persons, or even brought to his own recollection."

Mr. Langton having repeated the anecdote of Addison having distinguished between his powers in conversation and in writing, by saying, "I have only nine-pence in my pocket; but I can draw for a thousand pounds," Johnson said, "He had not that retort ready, Sir; he had prepared it before hand."—LANGTON. (turning to Mr. Boswell) "A fine surmise. Set a thief to catch a thief."

A gentleman who introduced his brother to Dr. Johnson was earnest to recommend him to the Doctor's notice, which he did by saying, "When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining."—"Sir, (said Johnson) I can wait."

Mrs. Thrale one day gave high praise to a *Mr. Long*.—JOHNSON. "Nay, my dear Lady, don't talk so. Mr. Long's character is very *short*. It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of genteel appearance, and that is all. I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do; for whenever there is exaggerated praise, every body is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now there is *****; you praised that man with so much disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. His blood is upon your head. By the same principle, your malice defeats itself; for your censure is too violent. And yet (looking to her with a leering smile) she is the first woman in the world, could she but restrain that wicked tongue of hers;—she would be the only woman, could she but command that little whirligig."

Mrs. Thrale mentioned a gentleman who had acquired a fortune of four thousand a year in trade, but was absolutely miserable because he could not talk in company. "I am a most unhappy man (said he). I am invited to conversa-

tions; I go to conversations; but, alas! I have no conversation."—JOHNSON. "Man commonly cannot be successful in different ways. This gentleman has spent, in getting four thousand pounds a year, the time in which he might have learned to talk; and now he cannot talk." Mr. Perkins made a droll remark: "If he had got his four thousand a year as a mountebank, he might have learnt to talk at the same time that he was getting his fortune."

Some other gentlemen came in. The conversation concerning the person whose character Dr. Johnson had treated so slightingly, as he did not know his merit, was resumed. Mrs. Thrale said—"You think so of him, Sir, because he is quiet, and does not exert himself with force.—You'll be saying the same thing of Mr. ***** there, who sits as quiet—" This was not well bred; and Johnson did not let it pass without correction. "Nay, Madam (said he), what right have you to talk thus? Both Mr. ***** and I have reason to take it ill. *You* may talk so of Mr. *****, but why do you make *me* do it? Have I said any thing against Mr. *****? You have *set* him, that I might shoot him: but I have not shot him."

Mr. Beauclerk had such a propensity to satire, that at one time Johnson said to him, "You never open your mouth but with intention to

give pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention." At another time applying to him, with a slight alteration, a line of Pope, he said, " Thy love of folly, and thy scorn of fools— Every thing thou dost shews the one, and every thing thou say'st the other." At another time he said to him, " Thy body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue."

" Demosthenes Taylor, as he was called (that is, the Editor of Demosthenes)," said Johnson, " was the most silent man, the merest statue of a man that I have ever seen. I once dined in company with him, and all he said during the whole time was no more than *Richard.* How a man should say only Richard, it is not easy to imagine. But it was thus: Dr. Douglas was talking of Dr. Zachary Grey, and ascribing to him something that was written by Dr. Richard Grey; so to correct him, Taylor said (imitating his affected sententious emphasis and nod), *Richard.*"

At another time, talking of oratory, Mr. Wilkes, who was of the party, described it as accompanied with all the charms of poetical expression.— JOHNSON. " No, Sir; oratory is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place."—WILKES. " But this does not move the passions."—JOHNSON. " He must be a weak man who is to be so

moved."—WILKES (naming a celebrated orator). "Amidst all the brilliancy of ——'s imagination, and the exuberance of his wit, there is a strange want of *taste*. It was observed of Apelles's Venus, that her flesh seemed as if she had been nourished by roses: his oratory would sometimes make one suspect that he eats potatoes and drinks whisky."

"A celebrated wit being mentioned, Johnson said, "One may say of him as was said of a French wit, *Il n'a de l'esprit que contre Dieu.* I have been several times in company with him, but never perceived any strong power of wit. He produces a general effect by various means; he has a cheerful countenance, and a gay voice. Besides, his trade is wit. It would be as wild in him to come into company without merriment, as for a highwayman to take the road without his pistols."—"Has not —— a great deal of wit, Sir?"—JOHNSON. "I do not think so, Sir. He is, indeed, continually attempting wit, but he fails. And I have no more pleasure in hearing a man attempting wit and failing, than in seeing a man trying to leap over a ditch and tumbling into it *."

* Garrick once remarked of the Doctor himself, "Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him.—You may be diverted by them; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no." Mrs. Thrale justly and wittily said, that "Johnson's conversation was

A writer of deserved eminence being mentioned, Johnson said, "Why, Sir, he is a man of good parts; but being originally poor, he has got a love of mean company and low jocularity; a very bad thing, Sir. To laugh is good, as to talk is good. But you ought no more to think it enough if you laugh, than you are to think it enough if you talk. You may laugh in as many ways as you talk; and surely *every* way of talking that is practised cannot be esteemed."

One being named as a very learned man—"Yes, Sir (said Johnson), he has a great deal of learning; but it never lies straight. There is never one idea by the side of another; 'tis all entangled; and then he drives it awkwardly upon conversation."

"People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion. In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money: and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune,

much too strong for a person accustomed to obsequiousness and flattery; it was *mustard in a young child's mouth.*"

and rank, that dissipate mens' attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind."

When Mr. B. one day complained of having dined at a splendid table without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being remembered, he said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conversation."—BOSWELL. "Why then meet at table?"—JOHNSON. "Why to eat and drink together, and promote kindness; and, Sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation; for when there is, people differ in opinion, and get into bad humour, or some of the company, who are not capable of such conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy."

An author of considerable eminence having engrossed a good share of a conversation, and having said nothing but what was trifling and insignificant, Johnson, when he was gone, observed, "It is wonderful what a difference there sometimes is between a man's powers of writing and of talking. ******* writes with great spirit, but is a poor talker; had he held his tongue we might have supposed him to have been restrained by modesty; but he has spoken a great deal to-day, and you have heard what stuff it was."

Talking of an acquaintance distinguished for knowing an uncommon variety of miscellaneous articles both in antiquities and polite literature, he observed, "You know, Sir, he runs about with little weight upon his mind." And talking of another very ingenious gentleman, who from the warmth of his temper was at variance with many of his acquaintance, and wished to avoid them, he said, "Sir, he leads the life of an outlaw."

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman ask Mr. Levett a variety of questions concerning him when he was sitting by, he broke out, "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me. I am sick of both."—"A man (said he) should not talk of himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take care not to be made a proverb; and therefore should avoid having any one topick of which people can say, 'We shall hear him upon it.' There was a Dr. Oldfield, who was always talking of the Duke of Marlborough; he came into a coffee-house one day, and told that his Grace had spoken in the House of Lords for half an hour. 'Did he indeed speak for half an hour?' (said Belchier, the surgeon;) 'Yes.' 'And what did he say of Dr. Oldfield?' 'Nothing.' 'Why then, Sir, he was very ungrateful; for Dr. Oldfield could not have spoken for a quarter of an hour without saying something of him.'

One evening, in company, an ingenious and learned gentleman read a letter of compliment which he had received from one of the Professors of a Foreign University. Johnson, in an irritable fit, thinking there was too much ostentation, said, "I never receive any of these tributes of applause from abroad. One instance I recollect of a foreign publication, in which mention is made of *l'illustre Lockman.*"

A learned gentleman, who in the course of conversation wished to inform the company of this simple fact, that the Counsel upon the circuit at Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plentitude of phrase told, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town-hall; that, by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the Counsel were near the town-hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility.—Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully however), "It is a pity, Sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth."

A dull country magistrate once gave Johnson a long tedious account of his exercising his cri-

minal jurisdiction, the result of which was his having sentenced four convicts to transportation. Johnson, in an agony of impatience to get rid of such a companion, exclaimed, "I heartily wish, Sir, that I were a fifth."

At another time, having argued at some length with a pertinacious gentleman, his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, "I don't understand you, Sir;" upon which Johnson observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

He used to say, that he made it a constant rule to talk as *well* as he could, both as to sentiment and expression; by which means, what had been originally effort became familiar and easy.

Mr. Boswell being about to embark for Holland, and taking leave of Johnson at Harwich, happened to say that it would be terrible if he should not find a speedy opportunity of returning to London, and be confined to so dull a place.—JOHNSON. "Don't, Sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters. It would *not* be *terrible* though I *were* to be detained some time here."

He found fault with one for using the phrase to *make* money. "Don't you see (said he) the impropriety of it? To *make* money is to coin it: you should say *get* money." The phrase, how-

ever, is pretty current. But Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms; such as *pledging myself* for *undertaking; line* for *department*, or *branch*, as the *civil line*, the *banking line*. He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea* in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building; but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law "delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration;" and the first speakers in parliament "entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member;" or "reprobating an *idea* unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country." Johnson called this "modern cant."

He pronounced the word *heard* as if spelt with a double *e*, *heerd*, instead of sounding it *herd*, as it is most usually done. He said his reason was, that if it was pronounced *herd*, there would be a single exception from the English pronunciation of the syllable *ear*, and he thought it better not to have that exception.

Sir Joshua Reynolds having one day said, that

he took the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and his wit, and of his understanding by the remarks which he repeated; being always sure that he must be a weak man who quotes common things with an emphasis as if they were oracles; Johnson agreed with him, and Sir Joshua having also observed, that the real character of a man was found out by his amusements, Johnson added, "Yes, Sir; no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

Johnson had a kind of general aversion to a pun. "He once, however (says Mr. B.), endured one of mine. When we were talking of a numerous company in which he had distinguished himself highly, I said, 'Sir, you were a COD surrounded by smelts. Is not this enough for you? at a time too when you were not *fishing* for a compliment?' He laughed at this with a complacent approbation. Old Mr. Sheridan observed, upon my mentioning it to him, 'He liked your compliment so well, he was willing to take it with *pun sauce*.' For my own part (adds Mr. B.), I think no innocent species of wit or pleasantry should be suppressed; and that a good pun may be admitted among the smaller excellencies of lively conversation."

The reader will probably be surprised to hear, that the great Dr. Johnson could amuse himself with so slight and playful a species of composi-

tion as a *Charade*. The following, however, he made on Dr. *Barnard*, now Lord Bishop of Killaloe.

CHARADE.

"My *first*[1] shuts out thieves from your house or your room,
"My *second*[2] expresses a Syrian perfume.
"My *whole*[3] is a man in whose converse is shar'd
"The strength of a Bar and the sweetness of Nard."

INDULGENCE IN WINE.

MR. BOSWELL one evening ventured to undertake the defence of convivial indulgence in wine. After urging the common plausible topicks, he at last had recourse to the maxim, *in vino veritas;* a man who is well warmed with wine will speak truth. "Why, Sir (said Johnson), that may be an argument for drinking, if you suppose men in general to be liars. But, Sir, I would not keep company with a fellow who lies as long as he is sober, and whom you must make drunk before you can get a word of truth out of him."

He said, few people had intellectual resources sufficient to forego the pleasures of wine. They

[1] Bar. [2] Nard. [3] Barnard.

could not otherwise contrive how to fill the interval between dinner and supper.

A gentleman having to some of the usual arguments for drinking added this: "You know, Sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would not you allow a man to drink for that reason?"—"Yes, Sir (said Johnson, with perhaps unnecessary severity), if he sat next *you*."

In a party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, the question was discussed, whether drinking improved conversation and benevolence. Sir Joshua maintained it did.—*J.* "No, Sir: before dinner men meet with great inequality of understanding; and those who are conscious of their inferiority have the modesty not to talk. When they have drunk wine, every man feels himself happy, and loses that modesty, and grows impudent and vociferous: but he is not improved; he is only not sensible of his defects." Sir Joshua said, the Doctor was talking of the effects of excess in wine; but that a moderate glass enlivened the mind, by giving a proper circulation to the blood. "I am (said he) in very good spirits when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted; wine puts me in the same state as when I got up; and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better."—*J.* "No, Sir; wine gives not light, gay, ideal hilarity; but tumultuous, noisy, clamor-

ous merriment. I have heard none of those drunken,—nay, drunken is a coarse word,—none of those *vinous* flights."—SIR JOSHUA. "Because you have sat by, quite sober, and felt an envy of the happiness of those who were drinking."—*J.* "Perhaps, contempt: And, Sir, it is not necessary to be drunk one's self, to relish the wit of drunkenness. Do we not judge of the drunken wit of the dialogue between Iago and Cassio, the most excellent in its kind, when we are quite sober? Wit is wit, by whatever means it is produced; and, if good, will appear so at all times. I admit that the spirits are raised by drinking, as by the common participation of any pleasure: cock-fighting, or bear-baiting, will raise the spirits of a company, as drinking does, though surely they will not improve conversation. I also admit, that there are some sluggish men who are improved by drinking; as there are fruits which are not good till they are rotten. There are such men, but they are medlars. I indeed allow that there have been a very few men of talents who were improved by drinking; but I maintain that I am right as to the effects of drinking in general; and let it be considered, that there is no position, however false in its universality, which is not true of some particular man." —Sir William Forbes said, "Might not a man warmed with wine be like a bottle of beer, which

is made brisker by being set before the fire?"—"Nay (said Johnson, laughing), I cannot answer that—that is too much for me."—Mr. Boswell observed, "that wine did some people harm, by inflaming, confusing, and irritating their minds; but that the experience of mankind had declared in favour of moderate drinking."—*J.* "Sir, I do not say it is wrong to produce self-complacency by drinking; I only deny that it improves the mind. When I drank wine, I scorned to drink it when in company. I have drunk many a bottle by myself; in the first place, because I had need of it to raise my spirits; in the second place, because I would have nobody to witness its effects upon me."

On another occasion, talking of the effects of drinking, he said, "Drinking may be practised with great prudence; a man who exposes himself when he is intoxicated has not the art of getting drunk; a sober man, who happens occasionally to get drunk, readily enough goes into a new company, which a man who has been drinking should never do. Such a man will undertake any thing; he is without skill in inebriation. I used to slink home when I had drunk too much. A man accustomed to self-examination will be conscious when he is drunk, though an habitual drunkard will not be conscious of it. I knew a physician who for twenty years was not sober;

yet in a pamphlet which he wrote upon fevers he appealed to Garrick and me for his vindication from a charge of drunkenness. A bookseller (naming him) who got a large fortune by trade, was so habitually and equably drunk, that his most intimate friends never perceived that he was more sober at one time than another."

He once gave the following very judicious practical advice upon the subject: "A man who has been drinking wine at all freely should never go into a new company. With those who have partaken of wine with him, he may be pretty well in unison; but he will probably be offensive, or appear ridiculous, to other people."

At another time being at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors; and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, "that a man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk." He was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge, not from recollection, which might be dim, but from immediate sensation. He shook his head, and said, "Poor stuff! No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavour of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and then brandy will do soonest for a man what drinking *can* do for him. There are, indeed, few who are able to drink brandy. That

is a power rather to be wished for than attained. And yet (proceeded he) as in all pleasure hope is a considerable part, I know not but fruition comes too quick by brandy. Florence wine I think the worst; it is wine only to the eye; it is wine neither while you are drinking it, nor after you have drunk it; it neither pleases the taste, nor exhilarates the spirit." "I reminded him (says Mr. B.) how heartily he and I used to drink wine together when we were first acquainted, and how I used to have a head-ache after sitting up with him. He did not like to have this recalled, or perhaps, thinking that I boasted improperly, resolved to have a witty stroke at me:—"Nay, Sir, it was not the *wine* that made your head ache, but the *sense* that I put into it."—*B.* "What, Sir, will sense make the head ache?"—*J.* "Yes, Sir (with a smile), when it is not used to it." "No man (adds Mr. B.) who has a true relish of pleasantry could be offended at this; especially if Johnson in a long intimacy had given him repeated proofs of his regard and good estimation. I used to say, that as he had given me a thousand pounds in praise, he had a good right now and then to take a guinea from me."—*J.* "I require wine only when I am alone. I have then often wished for it, and often taken it."—"What, (said Mr. Spottiswoode, the Solicitor, who was present) by way of a companion, Sir?"—*J.* "To get rid

of myself, to send myself away. Wine gives great pleasure; and every pleasure is of itself a good. It is a good unless counterbalanced by evil. A man may have a strong reason not to drink wine; and that may be greater than the pleasure. Wine makes a man better pleased with himself. I do not say that it makes him more pleasing to others. Sometimes it does. But the danger is, that while a man grows better pleased with himself, he may be growing less pleasing to others. Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. It only puts in motion what has been locked up in frost. But this may be good, or it may be bad."—SPOTTISWOODE. "So, Sir, wine is a key which opens a box; but this box may be either full or empty."—JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, conversation is the key: wine is a pick-lock which forces open the box and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine which wine gives."—*B.* "The great difficulty of resisting wine is from benevolence. For instance, a good worthy man asks you to taste his wine which he has had twenty years in his cellar."—*J.* "Sir, all this notion about benevolence arises from a man's imagining himself to be of more importance to others than

he really is. They don't care a farthing whether he drinks wine or not."—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. "Yes, they do for the time."—*J.* "For the time! If they care this minute, they forget it the next. And as for the good worthy man; how do you know he is good and worthy? No good and worthy man will insist upon another man's drinking wine. As to the wine twenty years in the cellar—of ten men, three say this merely because they must say something; three are telling a lie when they say they have had the wine twenty years; three would rather save the wine;—one perhaps cares. I allow it is something to please one's company; and people are always pleased with those who partake pleasure with them. But after a man has brought himself to relinquish the great personal pleasure which arises from drinking wine, any other consideration is a trifle. To please others by drinking wine is something only if there be nothing against it. I should, however, be sorry to offend worthy men:

> Curst be the verse, how well so e'er it flow,
> That tends to make one worthy man my foe."

—*B.* "Curst be the *spring*, the *water*."—*J.* "But let us consider what a sad thing it would be if we were obliged to drink or do any thing else that may happen to be agreeable to the company *where* we are."—LANGTON. "By the same

rule you must join with a gang of cut-purses."—*J.* "Yes, Sir: but yet we must do justice to wine; we must allow it the power it possesses. To make a man pleased with himself, let me tell you, is doing a very great thing."

Some time after this Johnson again harangued against drinking wine: "A man (said he) may choose whether he will have abstemiousness and knowledge, or claret and ignorance." Dr. Robertson (who was very companionable) was beginning to dissent as to the proscription of claret. *J.* (with a placid smile) "Nay, Sir, you shall not differ with me; as I have said that the man is most perfect who takes in the most things, I am for knowledge and claret." "Mr. Eliot (says Mr. B.) mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *mahogany*; and it is made of two parts gin and one part treacle, well beaten together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr. Eliot. I thought it very good liquor; and said it was a counterpart of what is called *Athol porridge* in the Highlands of Scotland, which is a mixture of whiskey and honey." *J.* said, "that must be a better liquor than the Cornish, for both its component parts are better." He also observed, "*mahogany* must be a modern name, for it is not long since the wood called mahogany was known

in this country." I mentioned his scale of liquors; claret for boys—port for men—brandy for heroes. "Then (said Mr. Burke) let me have claret: I love to be a boy; to have the careless gaiety of boyish days."—*J.* "I should drink claret too if it would give me that—but it does not; it neither makes boys men, nor men boys. You'll be drowned by it before it has any effect upon you."

Talking of a man's resolving to deny himself the use of wine from moral and religious considerations, he said, "He must not doubt about it. When one doubts as to pleasure we know what will be the conclusion. I now no more think of drinking wine than a horse does. The wine upon the table is no more for me than for the dog that is under the table. Yet (added he) I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it.—University College has witnessed this."—*B.* "Why then, Sir, did you leave it off?"—*J.* "Why, Sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old and want it."—*B.* "I think, Sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life."—*J.* "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say

a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational."—*B.* "But if we could have pleasure always should not we be happy?—the greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." *J.* "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." *B.* "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have."—*J.* When we talk of pleasure we mean sensual pleasure. Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure: So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages!"

Dr. Johnson (says Mr. B.) recommended me to drink water only: "For (said he) you are then sure not to get drunk; whereas if you drink wine you are never sure." He however owned, that in his opinion a free use of wine did not shorten life; and said, he would not give less for the life of a certain Scotch lord (whom he named) celebrated for hard drinking, than for that of a sober man. "But stay (said he with his usual intelligence and accuracy of enquiry), does it take

much wine to make him drunk?"—I answered, "a great deal either of wine or strong punch."—"Then (said he) that is the worse." Mr. Boswell illustrates his friend's observation thus: "A fortress, which soon surrenders, has its walls less shattered than when a long and obstinate resistance is made."

Finding him still persevering in his abstinence from wine, a friend ventured to speak to him of it.—*J.* "Sir, I have no objection to a man's drinking wine if he can do it in moderation. I found myself apt to go to excess in it, and therefore after having been for some time without it on account of illness, I thought it better not to return to it. Every man is to judge for himself according to the effects which he experiences. One of the fathers tells us, he found fasting made him so peevish that he did not practise it."

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you as an apology for being in

such a situation?"—Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say—he said he was sorry for it."

"I was at one time (says Mr. B.) myself a water-drinker upon trial by Johnson's recommendation; and my friend observed, "Boswell is a bolder combatant than Sir Joshua: he argues for wine without the help of wine; but Sir Joshua with it."— SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (who was of the party), "But to please one's company is a strong motive."—*J.* (who from drinking only water supposed every body who drank wine to be elevated), "I won't argue any more with you, Sir. You are too far gone."—SIR JOSHUA. "I should have thought so indeed, Sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done."—JOHNSON. (drawing himself in, and blushing), "Nay, don't be angry. I did not mean to offend you."—SIR J. "At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me; but I brought myself to drink it that I might be like other people. The pleasure of drinking wine is so connected with pleasing your company, that altogether there is something of social goodness in it."—*J.* "Sir, this is only saying the same thing over again."—SIR J. "No, this is new."—*J.* "You put it in new words, but it is an old thought. This is one of the disadvantages of wine. It makes a man mistake words for thoughts."—*B.* "I think it is a new thought,

at least it is in a new attitude."—*J.* "Nay, Sir, it is only in a new coat; or an old coat with a new facing. It is *(laughing heartily)*, the old dog in a new doublet. An extraordinary instance, however, may occur where a man's patron will do nothing for him unless he will drink: *there* may be a good reason for drinking."

Mr. Boswell mentioned a nobleman who he believed was really uneasy if his company would not drink hard.—JOHNSON. "That is from having had people about him whom he has been accustomed to command."—BOSWELL. "Supposing I should be *tête-à-tête* with him at table."—*J.* "Sir, there is no more reason for your drinking with *him*, than his being sober with *you*."—*B.* "Why that is true; for it would do him less hurt to be sober than it would do me to get drunk."—*J.* Yes, Sir; and from what I have heard of him one would not wish to sacrifice himself to such a man. If he must always have somebody to drink with him he should buy a slave, and then he would be sure to have it. They who submit to drink as another pleases make themselves his slaves."—*B.* "But, Sir, you will surely make allowance for the duty of hospitality.—A gentleman who loves drinking comes to visit me."—*J.* "Sir, a man knows whom he visits; he comes to the table of a sober man."—*B.* "But, Sir, you and I should *not have* been so well received in the Highlands

and Hebrides if I had not drunk with our worthy friends. Had I drunk water only, as you did, they would not have been so cordial."—*J.* "Sir William Temple mentions, that in his travels through the Netherlands he had two or three gentlemen with him, and when a bumper was necessary he put it on *them*. Were I to travel again through the islands I would have Sir Joshua with me to take the bumpers."—*B.* "But, Sir, let me put a case: Suppose Sir Joshua should take a jaunt into Scotland; he does me the honour to pay me a visit at my house in the country; I am overjoyed at seeing him; we are quite by ourselves; shall I unsociably and churlishly let him sit drinking by himself? No, no, my dear Sir Joshua, you shall not be treated so, I *will* take a bottle with you."

MARRIAGE.

To Mr. Boswell on the eve of marriage Johnson said, "Now that you are going to marry, do not expect more from life than life will afford. You may often find yourself out of humour, and you may often think your wife not studious enough to please you; and yet you may have

reason to consider yourself as upon the whole very happily married."

Of marriage in general, he observed, "Our marriage service is too refined: it is calculated only for the best kind of marriages; whereas we should have a form for matches of convenience, of which there are many."

At General Paoli's, a question was one day started, whether the state of marriage was natural to man.—JOHNSON. "Sir, it is so far from being natural for a man and woman to live in a state of marriage, that we find all the motives which they have for remaining in that connection, and the restraints which civilized society imposes to prevent separation, are hardly sufficient to keep them together." The General said, that in a state of nature a man and woman uniting together would form a strong and constant affection, by the mutual pleasure each would receive; and that the same causes of dissention would not arise between them, as occur between husband and wife in a civilized state.—*J.* "Sir, they would have dissentions enough, though of another kind. One would choose to go a hunting in this wood, the other in that; one would choose to go a fishing in this lake, the other in that; or, perhaps, one would choose to go a hunting when the other would choose to go a fishing; and so they would part. Besides, Sir, a savage man and a

savage woman meet by chance; and when the man sees another woman that pleases him better, he will leave the first."

Yet he well observed, "Marriage is the best state for a man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state.

"Marriage is much more necessary to a man than to a woman; for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. You (addressing Mr. Boswell) will recollect my saying to some ladies the other day, that I had often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom, and so much more attention paid to them while unmarried, than when married."

He one day remarked, that it was commonly a weak man who married for love. Some one then talked of marrying a woman of fortune; and mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionally expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expences.—JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune, being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously; but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a

gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

A person was mentioned as having resolved never to marry a pretty woman. Johnson said, "Sir, it is a very foolish resolution not to marry a pretty woman. Beauty is of itself very estimable. No, Sir, I would prefer a pretty woman, unless there were objections to her. A pretty woman may be foolish; a pretty woman may be wicked; a pretty woman may not like me. But there is no such danger in marrying a pretty woman as is apprehended; she will not be persecuted if she does not invite persecution. A pretty woman, if she has a mind to be wicked, can find a readier way than another; and that is all."

Being asked if he did not suppose that there were fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man might be as happy, as with any one woman in particular, he said, "Aye, Sir, fifty thousand."—BOSWELL. "Then, Sir, you are not of opinion with some, who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts."—"To be sure not, Sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor upon a due consideration of characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter."

A gentleman being censured for marrying a second time, as it shewed a disregard of his first wife, he said, "Not at all. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays the highest compliment to the first, by shewing that she made him so happy as a married man, that he wishes to be so a second time."—So ingenious a turn did he give to this delicate question. And yet, on another occasion, he owned, that he once had almost asked a promise of Mrs. Johnson that she would not marry again, but he checked himself.

He observed upon the marriage of some one, "He has done a foolish thing: he has married a widow, when he might have had a maid."

A gentleman, who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died; Johnson said, it was the triumph of hope over experience.

He observed, that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.

He did not approve of late marriages, observing, that more was lost in point of time, than

compensated for by any possible advantages.—Even ill assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.

One remark he made, of such moment to the rational conduct of a man in the decline of life, that it deserves to be imprinted upon every mind: "There is nothing against which an old man should be so much upon his guard as putting himself to nurse. Innumerable have been the melancholy instances of men once distinguished for firmness, resolution, and spirit, who in their latter days have been governed like children by interested female artifice."

When a gentleman one day told him he had bought a suit of lace for his lady. He said, "Well, Sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing." "I have done a good thing (said the gentleman), but I do not know that I have done a wise thing."—JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is drest as well as other people; and a wife is pleased that she is drest."

Talking of a young gentleman's marriage with an eminent singer, and his determination that she should no longer sing in public, though his father was very earnest she should, because her talents would be liberally rewarded, so as to make her a *good* fortune, it was questioned whether the

young gentleman, who had not a shilling in the world, but was blest with very uncommon talents, was not foolishly delicate, or foolishly proud, and his father truly rational without being mean. Johnson, with all the high spirit of a Roman senator, exclaimed, "He resolved wisely and nobly to be sure. He is a brave man. Would not a gentleman be disgraced by having his wife singing publickly for hire? No, Sir, there can be no doubt here. I know not if I should not prepare myself for a public singer, as readily as let my wife be one."

A young lady who had married a man much her inferior in rank being mentioned, a question arose how a woman's relations should behave to her in such a situation. While one contended that she ought to be treated with an inflexible steadiness of displeasure, Mrs. Thrale was all for mildness and forgiveness, and, according to the vulgar phrase, "making the best of a bad bargain." Johnson said, "Madam, we must distinguish. Were I a man of rank, I would not let a daughter starve who had made a mean marriage; but having voluntarily degraded herself from the station which she was originally entitled to hold, I would support her only in that which she herself had chosen; and would not put her on a level with my other daughters. You are to consider, Madam, that it is our duty to maintain the

subordination of civilized society; and when there is a gross and shameful deviation from rank, it should be punished so as to deter others from the same perversion *."

A gentleman talked to him of a lady whom he greatly admired and wished to marry, but was afraid of her superiority of talents. "Sir (said he), you need not be afraid; marry her. Before a year goes about, you'll find her reason much weaker, and her wit not so bright." Yet the gentleman may be justified in his apprehension by one of Dr. Johnson's admirable sentences in his life of Waller: "He doubtless praised many whom he

* "After frequently considering this subject (says Mr. B.), I am more and more confirmed in what I then meant to express, and which was sanctioned by the authority, and illustrated by the wisdom of Johnson; and I think it of the utmost consequence to the happiness of society, to which subordination is absolutely necessary. It is weak and contemptible, and unworthy in a parent, to relax in such a case. It is sacrificing general advantage to private feelings. And let it be considered, that the claim of a daughter who has acted thus, to be restored to her former situation, is either fantastical or unjust. If there be no value in the distinction of rank, what does she suffer by being kept in the situation to which she has descended? If there be value in that distinction, it ought to be steadily maintained. If indulgence be shown to such conduct, and the offenders know that in a longer or shorter time they shall be received as well as if they had not contaminated their blood by a base alliance, the great check upon that inordinate caprice which generally occasions low marriages will be removed, and the fair and comfortable order of improved life will be miserably disturbed."

would have been afraid to marry; and, perhaps, married one whom he would have been ashamed to praise. Many qualities contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve."

"Supposing (said he) a wife to be of a studious or argumentative turn, it would be very troublesome; for instance—if a woman should continually dwell upon the subject of the Arian heresy."

He expressed his opinion, that "a man has a very bad chance for happiness in that state unless he marries a woman of very strong and fixed principles of religion."

He maintained, contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned.

Talking of the heinousness of the crime of adultery, by which the peace of families was destroyed, he said, "Confusion of progeny constitutes the essence of the crime; and therefore a woman who breaks her marriage vows is much more criminal than a man who does it. A man, to be sure, is criminal in the sight of God; but he does not do his wife a very material injury, if he does not insult her; if, for instance, from mere wantonness of appetite, he steals privately to her

chambermaid. Sir, a wife ought not greatly to resent this. I would not receive home a daughter who had run away from her husband on that account. A wife should study to reclaim her husband by more attention to please him. Sir, a man will not, once in a hundred instances, leave his wife and go to a harlot, if his wife has not been negligent of pleasing."

Here he discovered that acute discrimination, that solid judgment, and that knowledge of human nature, for which he was upon all occasions remarkable. Taking care to keep in view the moral and religious duty, as understood in our nation, he shewed clearly, from reason and good sense, the greater degree of culpability in the one sex deviating from it than the other: and, at the same time, inculcated a very useful lesson as to *the way to keep him.*

Being asked if it was not hard that one deviation from chastity should absolutely ruin a young woman?—JOHNSON. "Why no, Sir; it is the great principle which she is taught. When she has given up that principle, she has given up every notion of female honour and virtue, which are all included in chastity."

"I mentioned to him (says Mr. Boswell) a dispute between a friend of mine and his lady, concerning conjugal infidelity, which my friend had *maintained* was by no means so bad in the hus-

band as in the wife. " Your friend was in the right, Sir, said Johnson. Between a man and his Maker it is a different question; but between a man and his wife a husband's infidelity is nothing. They are connected by children, by fortune, by serious considerations of community. Wise married women don't trouble themselves about the infidelity of their husbands."—Boswell. " To be sure there is a great difference between the offence of infidelity in a man and that of his wife.—*J.* " The difference is boundless. The man imposes no bastards upon his wife."

" Here (Mr. B. observes) it may be questioned, whether Johnson was entirely in the right. It will hardly be controverted, that the difference in the degree of criminality is very great on account of the consequences; but still it may be maintained, that independent of moral obligation, infidelity is by no means a light offence in a husband, because it must hurt a delicate attachment, in which a mutual constancy is implied, with such refined sentiments as Massinger has exhibited in his play of " The Picture." Johnson probably at another time would have admitted this opinion. And let it be kept in remembrance, that he was very careful not to give any encouragement to irregular conduct."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insist-

ing that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times; because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret.

He disapproved of the Royal Marriage Bill; "Because (said he) I would not have the people think that the validity of marriage depends on the will of man, or that the right of a King depends on the will of man. I should not have been against making the marriage of any of the royal family, without the approbation of the King and Parliament, highly criminal."

CHILDREN.

TALKING of the common remark, that affection descends, a gentleman said, that "this was wisely contrived for the preservation of mankind, for which it was not so necessary that there should be affection from children to parents, as from parents to children; nay there would be no harm in that view though children should at a certain age eat their parents."—JOHNSON. "But,

Sir, if this were known generally to be the case, parents would not have affection for children." —Boswell. "True, Sir; for it is in expectation of return that parents are so attentive to their children; and I know a very pretty instance of a little girl of whom her father was very fond, who once when he was in a melancholy fit, and had gone to bed, persuaded him to rise in good humour, by saying, "My dear papa, please to get up, and let me help you on with your clothes, that I may learn to do it when you are an old man."

"I know not (says Mr. B.) how so whimsical a thought came into my mind; but I asked, "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a new-born child with you, what would you do?"—Johnson. "Why, Sir, I should not much like my company."—*B.* "But would you take the trouble of rearing it?" He seemed, as may well be supposed, unwilling to pursue the subject; but upon my persevering in my question, replied, "Why yes, Sir, I would; but I must have all conveniencies. If I had no garden, I would make a shed on the roof, and take it there for fresh air. I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water, to please it, not with cold water, to give it pain."—*B.* "But, Sir, does not heat relax?"—*J.* "Sir, you are not to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating

children does no good. I'll take you five children from London, who shall cuff five Highland children. Sir, a man bred in London will carry a burthen, or run, or wrestle, as well as a man brought up in the hardiest manner in the country."—*B.* "Good living, I suppose, makes the Londoners strong.—*J.* "Why, Sir, I don't know that it does. Our chairmen from Ireland, who are as strong men as any, have been brought up upon potatoes. Quantity makes up for quality." —*B.* "Would you teach this child that I have furnished you with any thing?"—*J.* "No, I would not be apt to teach it."—*B.* "Would not you have a pleasure in teaching it?—*J.* "No, Sir, I should *not* have a pleasure in teaching it." —*B.* "Have you not a pleasure in teaching men? *There* I have you. You have the same pleasure in teaching men that I should have in teaching children."—*J.* "Why, something about that."—*B.* "Do you think, Sir, that what is called natural affection is born with us? It seems to me to be the effect of habit, or of gratitude for kindness. No child has it for a parent whom it has not seen."—*J.* "Why, Sir, I think there is an instinctive natural affection in parents toward their children."

EDUCATION.

In a conversation on the educating of children, Mr. Boswell asked Johnson what he thought was best to teach them first.—"Sir (said he), it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both."

Johnson himself began to learn Latin with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or under-master of Lichfield school, "A man (said he) very skilful in his little way." With him he continued two years, and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter, the head-master, who, according to his account, "was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used (said he) to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence; for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it. He would ask a boy a question; and if he did not answer it, he would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it; for instance, he would call

upon a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked. Now, Sir, if a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him."

Johnson, however, was very sensible how much he owed to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Langton one day asked him how he acquired so accurate a knowledge of Latin, in which he was thought not to be exceeded by any man of his time. He said, "My master whipt me very well. Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing." He also told Mr. Langton, that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, "And this I do to save you from the gallows." Johnson, upon all occasions, expressed his approbation of enforcing instruction by means of the rod. "I would rather (said he) have the rod the general terror of all, to make them learn, than tell a child, if you do thus, or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas, by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other."

"Johnson's opinion of the most proper course to be pursued in the instruction of youth is as-

certained by the following paper in his own hand-writing, given to a relation, and now in the possession of Mr. John Nichols:

"SCHEME FOR THE CLASSES OF A GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

"WHEN the introduction, or formation of nouns and verbs, is perfectly mastered, let them learn

"Corderius, by Mr. Clarke, beginning at the same time to translate out of the introduction, that by this means they may learn the syntax.—Then let them proceed to

"Erasmus, with an English translation, by the same author.

"Class II. Learns Eutropius and Cornelius Nepos, or Justin, with the translation.

"N. B. The first class gets for their part every morning the rules which they have learned before, and in the afternoon learns the Latin rules of the nouns and verbs.

"They are examined in the rules which they have learned every Thursday and Saturday.

"The second class does the same whilst they are in Eutropius; afterwards their part is in the irregular nouns and verbs, and in the rules for making and scanning verses. They are examined as the first.

"Class III. Ovid's Metamorphoses in the

morning, and Cæsar's Commentaries in the afternoon.

"Practise in the Latin rules till they are perfect in them; afterwards in Mr. Leeds's Greek Grammar. Examined as before.

"Afterwards they proceed to Virgil, beginning at the same time to write themes and verses and to learn Greek; from thence passing on to Horace, &c. as shall seem most proper.

"I know not well what books to direct you to, because you have not informed me what study you will apply yourself to. I believe it will be most for your advantage to apply yourself wholly to the languages, till you go to the University. The Greek authors I think it best for you to read are these:

"Cebes.	
"Ælian.	
"Lucian by Leeds.	Attick.
"Xenophon.	
"Homer.	Ionick.
"Theocritus.	Dorick.
"Euripides.	Attick and Dorick.

"Thus you will be tolerably skilled in all the dialects, beginning with the Attick, to which the rest must be referred.

"In the study of Latin, it is proper not to read the latter authors, till you are well versed in those of the purest ages; as Terence, Tully,

Cæsar, Sallust, Nepos, Velleius Paterculus, Virgil, Horace, Phædrus.

"The greatest and most necessary task still remains, to attain a habit of expression, without which knowledge is of little use. This is necessary in Latin, and more necessary in English; and can only be acquired by a daily imitation of the best and correctest authors.

"SAM. JOHNSON."

"Dr. Johnson and I (says Mr. B.) one day took a sculler at the Temple-stairs, and set out for Greenwich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education.—JOHNSON. "Most certainly, Sir; for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, Sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it."—"And yet (said Mr. B.) people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning."—*J.* "Why, Sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors." He then called to

the boy, " What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?"—" Sir (said the boy), I would give what I have." Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and we gave him a double fare. The Doctor then turning to Mr. B. said, " Sir, a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge."

To Mr. Langton when about to establish a school upon his estate, it had been suggested, that it might have a tendency to make the people less industrious. " No, Sir (said Johnson). While learning to read and write is a distinction, the few who have that distinction may be the less inclined to work; but when every body learns to read and write, it is no longer a distinction. A man who has a laced waistcoat is too fine a man to work; but if every body had laced waistcoats, we should have people working in laced waistcoats. There are no people whatever more industrious, none who work more than our manufacturers; yet they have all learnt to read and write. Sir, you must not neglect doing a thing immediately good, from fear of remote evil, from fear of its being abused. A man who has candles may sit up too late, which he would not do if he had not candles; but nobody will deny that the art of making candles, by which light is

continued to us beyond the time that the sun gives us light, is a valuable art, and ought to be preserved."—BOSWELL. "But, Sir, would it not be better to follow Nature, and go to bed and rise just as Nature gives us light or withholds it?"—JOHNSON. "No, Sir; for then we should have no kind of equality in the partition of our time between sleeping and waking. It would be very different in different seasons and in different places. In some of the northern parts of Scotland how little light is there in the depth of winter!"

Of education at great schools, Johnson displayed the advantages and disadvantages in a luminous manner; but his arguments preponderated much in favour of the benefit which a boy of good parts might receive at one of them.

At another time he said, "There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other."—Yet more, he observed, was learned in publick than in private schools, from emulation; "there is (said he) the collision of mind with mind, or the radiation of many minds pointing to one centre. Though few boys make their own exercises, yet if a good exercise is given up, out of a great number of boys, it is made by somebody. I hate by-roads in education. Education is as well known, and has long been as well known, as ever

it can be. Endeavouring to make children prematurely wise is useless labour. Suppose they have more knowledge at five or six years than other children, what use can be made of it? It will be lost before it is wanted, and the waste of so much time and labour of the teacher can never be repaid. Too much is expected from precocity, and too little performed. Miss —— was an instance of early cultivation; but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding-schoool, so that all her employment now is,

'To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.'

She tells the children, 'this is a cat, and that is a dog with four legs and a tail;' see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak. I am always for getting a boy forward in his learning; for that is a sure good. I would let him at first read *any* English book which happens to engage his attention; because you have done a great deal when you have brought him to have entertainment from a book. He'll get better books afterwards."

Johnson advised Mr. Boswell not to *refine* in the education of his children. "Life (said he) will not bear refinement; you must do as other people do. Above all, accustom your children *constantly* to tell the truth; if a thing happened

at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end."—BOSWELL. "It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened." A lady in the company, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say, "Nay, this is too much. If Mr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching."—JOHNSON. "Well, Madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying that there is so much falsehood in the world."

Talking of instruction, "People have now-a-days (said he) got a strange opinion that every thing should be taught by lectures. Now I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shewn. You may teach chemistry by lectures; you might teach making of shoes by lectures!"

He allowed very great influence to education.

"I do not (he said) deny but there is some original difference in minds; but it is nothing in comparison of what is formed by education. We may instance the science of *numbers*, which all minds are equally capable of attaining; yet we find a prodigious difference in the powers of different men, in that respect, after they are grown up, because their minds have been more or less exercised in it; and I think the same cause will explain the difference of excellence in other things, gradations admitting always some difference in the first principles."

He often took occasion to enlarge upon the wretchedness of a sea life. "A ship (said he) is worse than a gaol. There is in a gaol better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger. When men come to like a sea life, they are not fit to live on land."—"Then (said Mr. B.) it would be cruel in a father to breed his son to the sea."—JOHNSON. "It would be cruel in a father who thinks as I do. Men go to sea before they know the unhappiness of that way of life; and when they have come to know it, they cannot escape from it, because it is then too late to choose another profession; as indeed is generally the case with men, when they have once engaged in any particular way of life."

In one of Mr. Dilly's literary parties, somebody

was mentioned as having wished that Milton's 'Tractate on Education' should be printed along with his Poems in the edition of the English Poets then going on. Johnson said, "It would be breaking in upon the plan; but would be of no great consequence. So far as it would be any thing it would be wrong. Education in England has been in danger of being hurt by two of its greatest men, Milton and Locke. Milton's plan is impracticable, and I suppose has never been tried; Locke's, I fancy, has been tried often enough, but is very imperfect; it gives too much to one side, and too little to the other: it gives too little to literature."

On another occasion he said, "Where there is no education, as in savage countries, men will have the upper hand of women. Bodily strength, no doubt, contributes to this; but it would be so, exclusive of that; for it is mind that always governs. When it comes to dry understanding, man has the better."

Mr. Boswell observed, that he was well assured, that the people of Otaheite who have the bread tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread;—plowing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking.—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are

told of the advantages of civilized life. Were you to tell men who live without houses, how we pile brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold, and breaks his neck, he would laugh heartily at our folly in building; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, Sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf) this is better than the bread tree."

He repeated an argument, which is to be found in his "Rambler," against the notion that the brute creation is endowed with the faculty of reason: "birds build by instinct: they never improve; they build their first nest as well as any one that they ever build." Goldsmith said, "Yet we see if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest, and lay again."—JOHNSON. "Sir, that is because at first she has full time and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight."—*G.* "The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it."

The master of a public school at Campbelltown, in Scotland, had been suspended from his office, on a charge against him of having used immoderate and cruel correction. Mr. Boswell was engaged to plead the cause of the master, and

consulted Dr. Johnson on the subject, who made the following observations; " The charge is, that he has used immoderate and cruel correction. Correction, in itself, is not cruel; children, being not reasonable, can be governed only by fear. To impress this fear, is therefore one of the first duties of those who have the care of children. It is the duty of a parent, and has never been thought inconsistent with parental tenderness. It is the duty of a master, who is in the highest exaltation when he is *loco parentis.* Yet, as good things become evil by excess, correction, by being immoderate, may become cruel. But when is correction immoderate? When it is more frequent or more severe than is required *ad monendum et docendum,* for reformation and instruction. No severity is cruel which obstinacy makes necessary; for the greatest cruelty would be to desist, and leave the scholar too careless for instruction, and too much hardened for reproof. Locke, in his treatise of Education, mentions a mother with applause, who whipped an infant eight times before she had subdued it; for had she stopped at the seventh act of correction, her daughter, says he, would have been ruined. The degrees of obstinacy in young minds are very different; as different must be the degrees of persevering severity. A stubborn scholar must be corrected till he is subdued. The discipline of a

school is military. There must either be unbounded licence or absolute authority. The master who punishes, not only consults the future happiness of him who is the immediate subject of correction, but he propagates obedience through the whole school, and establishes regularity by exemplary justice. The victorious obstinacy of a single boy would make his future endeavours of reformation or instruction totally ineffectual: obstinacy therefore must never be victorious. Yet it is well known, that there sometimes occurs a sullen and hardy resolution, that laughs at all common punishment, and bids defiance to all common degrees of pain. Correction must be proportioned to occasions. The flexible will be reformed by gentle discipline, and the refractory must be subdued by harsher methods. The degrees of scholastick, as of military punishment, no stated rules can ascertain. It must be enforced till it overpowers temptation; till stubbornness becomes flexible, and perverseness regular. Custom and reason have, indeed, set some bounds to scholastick penalties: the schoolmaster inflicts no capital punishments, nor enforces his edicts by either death or mutilation. The civil law has wisely determined, that a master who strikes out a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal. But punishments, however severe, that produce no lasting evil, may be just and

reasonable, because they may be necessary. Such have been the punishments used by the schoolmaster accused. No scholar has gone from him either blind or lame, or with any of his limbs or powers injured or impaired. They were irregular, and he punished them; they were obstinate, and he enforced his punishment. But, however provoked, he never exceeded the limits of moderation, for he inflicted nothing beyond present pain; and how much of that was required, no man is so little able to determine as those who have determined against him—the parents of the offenders. It has been said, that he used unprecedented and improper instruments of correction. Of this accusation the meaning is not very easy to be found. No instrument of correction is more proper than another, but as it is better adapted to produce present pain without lasting mischief. Whatever were his instruments, no lasting mischief has ensued; and therefore, however unusual, in hands so cautious they were proper. It has been objected, that he admits the charge of cruelty, by producing no evidence to confute it. Let it be considered, that his scholars are either dispersed at large in the world, or continue to inhabit the place in which they were bred. Those who are dispersed cannot be found; those who remain are the sons of his persecutors, and are not likely to support a man to whom their fathers are ene-

mies. If it be supposed that the enmity of their fathers proves the justice of the charge, it must be considered how often experience shows us, that men who are angry on one ground will accuse on another; with how little kindness, in a town of low trade, a man who lives by learning is regarded; and how implicitly, where the inhabitants are not very rich, a rich man is hearkened to and followed. In a place like Campbell-town it is easy for one of the principal inhabitants to make a party. It is easy for that party to heat themselves with imaginary grievances. It is easy for them to oppress a man poorer than themselves; and natural to assert the dignity of riches, by persisting in oppression."

Upon the same subject, Mr. Boswell also observed, "It is a very delicate matter to interfere between a master and his scholars; nor do I see how you can fix the degree of severity that a master may use."—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, till you can fix the degree of obstinacy and negligence of the scholars, you cannot fix the degree of severity of the master. Severity must be continued until obstinacy be subdued and negligence be cured."

A young man being mentioned, who was uneasy, from thinking that he was very deficient in learning and knowledge, *J.* said, "A man has no reason to complain who holds a middle place, and has many below him; and perhaps he has not six

of his years above him; perhaps not one. Though he may not know any thing perfectly, the general mass of knowledge that he has acquired is considerable. Time will do for him all that is wanting."

"Idleness (said Johnson) is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge*."

Goldsmith once attempted to maintain, perhaps from an affectation of paradox, "that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness." Why, Sir, (said Johnson) that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But upon the whole, knowledge, *per se*, is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although, perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it. Much might be done

* To a man (as Mr. Boswell justly remarks) of vigorous intellect and arduous curiosity like Johnson's, reading without a regular plan may be beneficial; but even such a man must submit to it, if he would attain a full understanding of any of the sciences.

if a man would put his whole mind to a particular object. By doing so, Norton made himself the great lawyer that he was allowed to be."

He one day observed, " All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not. In the same manner, all power, of whatever sort, is of itself desirable. A man would not submit to hem a ruffle of his wife, or his wife's maid; but if a mere wish could obtain it, he would rather wish to be able to hem a ruffle."

To Mr. Boswell (while studying at Utrecht) he gave the following advice:

" You will, perhaps, wish to ask what study I would recommend. I shall not speak of theology, because it ought not to be considered as a question whether you shall endeavour to know the will of GOD. I shall, therefore, consider only such studies as we are at liberty to pursue or to neglect; and of these I know not how you will make a better choice, than by studying the civil law, as your father advises, and the ancient languages, as you had determined for yourself; at least resolve, while you remain in any settled residence, to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books. The dissipation of thought of which you complain, is nothing more than the vacillation of a mind sus-

pended between different motives, and changing its direction as any motive gains or loses strength. If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusts of imagination will break away without any effect upon your conduct, and commonly without any traces left upon the memory.

"There lurks, perhaps, in every human heart a desire of distinction, which inclines every man first to hope, and then to believe, that Nature has given him something peculiar to himself. This vanity makes one mind nurse aversions, and another actuate desires, till they rise by art much above their original state of power; and as affectation, in time, improves to habit, they at last tyrannise over him who at first encouraged them only for show. Every desire is a viper in the bosom, who, while he was chill, was harmless; but when warmth gave him strength, exerted it in poison. You know a gentleman, who, when first he set his foot in the gay world, as he prepared himself to whirl in the vortex of pleasure, imagined a total indifference and universal negligence to be the most agreeable concomitants of youth, and the strongest indication of an airy temper and a quick apprehension. Vacant to every object, and sensible of every impulse, he

thought that all appearance of diligence would deduct something from the reputation of genius; and hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness, and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabrick obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life a while, was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue; he then wished to return to his studies; and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected, still willing to retain his claim to some extraordinary prerogatives, resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable decree of destiny, and concluded that Nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment.

"Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts for ever. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice. If you spend this day in study, you will find yourself still more able to study to-morrow; not that you are to expect that you shall at once obtain a complete victory. Depravity is not very easily overcome. Resolution will sometimes relax, and diligence will sometimes be interrupted; but let no accidental surprise or deviation, whether short or long, dispose you to despondency. Consider

these failings as incident to all mankind. Begin again where you left off, and endeavour to avoid the seducements that prevailed over you before."

CONDUCT.

"I BELIEVE (said Johnson) it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour. Xenophon observes, in his 'Treatise of Œconomy,' that if every thing be kept in a certain place, when any thing is worn out or consumed, the vacuity which it leaves will shew what is wanting; so if every part of time has its duty, the hour will call into remembrance its proper engagement."

He observed, that "it was a most mortifying reflection for any man to consider *what he had done*, compared with what *he might have done*."

He would allow no settled indulgence of idleness upon principle, and always repelled every attempt to urge excuses for it. A friend one day suggested, that it was not wholesome to study soon after dinner. "Ah, Sir, (said Johnson) don't give way to such a fancy. At one time of my life I had taken it into my head that it was

not wholesome to study between breakfast and dinner."

Mr. Boswell one day told him, that he had been to see a man ride upon three horses. "Such a man, Sir, (said he) should be encouraged; for his performances shew the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shews what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue."

At one time he said, "The more a man extends and varies his acquaintance the better." This, however, was meant with a just restriction; for on another occasion he observed, "A man may be so much of every thing, that he is nothing of any thing."

At a late period of his life he said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in *constant repair*."

During a visit at Oxford, the following conversation passed between the Doctor and Mr. Boswell on the subject of Mr. B.'s trying his fortune at the English bar. Being asked whether a

very extensive acquaintance in London, which was very valuable, and of great advantage to a man at large, might not be prejudicial to a lawyer, by preventing him from giving sufficient attention to his business, Johnson said, "Sir, you will attend to business as business lays hold of you. When not actually employed, you may see your friends as much as you do now. You may dine at a club every day, and sup with one of the members every night; and you may be as much at public places as one who has seen them all would wish to be. But you must take care to attend constantly in Westminster Hall; both to mind your business, as it is almost all learnt there (for nobody reads now); and to shew that you want to have business. And you must not be too often seen at public places, that competitors may not have it to say, 'He is always at the Playhouse or at Ranelagh, and never to be found at his chambers.' And, Sir, there must be a kind of solemnity in the manner of a professional man."

Concerning a private transaction, on which his opinion was asked, he made the following reflections, which are applicable on other occasions: "Nothing deserves more compassion than wrong conduct with good meaning; than loss or obloquy suffered by one who, as he is conscious only of good intentions, wonders why he loses that kind-

ness which he wishes to preserve; and not knowing his own fault, if, as may sometimes happen, nobody will tell him, goes on to offend by his endeavours to please."

At another time he said, "Never impose tasks upon mortals. To require two things is the way to have them both undone. In the correspondence of your friends do not fancy that an intermission of writing is a decay of kindness. No man is always in a disposition to write; nor has any man at all times something to say."

Being asked whether a man's being forward to make himself known to eminent people, and seeing as much of life, and getting as much information as he could in every way, was not lessening himself by his forwardness, he said, "No, Sir; a man always makes himself greater as he increases his knowledge."

Talking of a court-martial that was sitting upon a very momentous public occasion, he expressed much doubt of an enlightened decision; and said, "That perhaps there was not a member of it who, in the whole course of his life, had ever spent an hour by himself in balancing probabilities."

He observed, that "A principal source of erroneous judgment was viewing things partially, and only on *one side:* as for instance, *fortune-hunters,* when they contemplated the fortunes

singly and *separately* it was a dazzling and tempting object; but when they came to possess the wives and their fortunes *together*, they began to suspect that they had not made quite so good a bargain."

He one day maintained, that a father had no right to control the inclinations of his daughters in marriage.

Talking of divorces, Mr. Boswell asked if Othello's doctrine was not plausible?

> "He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
> Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all."

Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale joined against this. —JOHNSON. "Ask any man if he'd wish not to know of such an injury."—BOSWELL. "Would you tell your friend to make him unhappy?"— "*J.* Perhaps, Sir, I should not; but that would be from prudence on my own account. A man would tell his father."—*B.* "Yes, because he would not have spurious children to get any share of the family inheritance."—Mrs. THRALE. "Or he would tell his brother."—*B.* "Certainly his *elder* brother."—*J.* "You would tell your friend of a woman's infamy to prevent his marrying a prostitute: there is the same reason to tell him of his wife's infidelity, when he is married, to prevent the consequences of imposition. It is a breach of confidence not to tell a friend."

Talking of a point of delicate scrupulosity of moral conduct, he said to Mr. Langton, "Men of harder minds than ours will do many things from which you and I would shrink; yet, Sir, they will perhaps do more good in life than we. But let us try to help one another. If there be a wrong twist it may be set right. It is not probable that two people can be wrong the same way."

He thus characterised the Duke of Devonshire, grandfather of the present representative of that very respectable family: "He was not a man of superior abilities, but he was a man strictly faithful to his word. If, for instance, he had promised you an acorn, and none had grown that year in his woods, he would not have contented himself with that excuse; he would have sent to Denmark for it. So unconditional was he in keeping his word; so high as to the point of honour."—"This (says Mr. Boswell) was a liberal testimony from the Tory Johnson to the virtue of a great Whig nobleman."

The conflict of opposite principles he described as "The contention between pleasure and virtue, a struggle which will always be continued while the present system of nature shall subsist: nor can history or poetry exhibit more than pleasure triumphing over virtue, and virtue subjugating *pleasure*."

Speaking of a certain prelate who exerted
nself very laudably in building churches and
rsonage-houses, he said, " I do not, however,
d that he is esteemed a man of much profes-
nal learning, or a liberal patron of it; yet it is
ll where a man possesses any strong positive
cellence. Few have all kinds of merit belong-
; to their character. We must not examine
tters too deeply.—No, Sir, a *fallible being will*
l somewhere."

" Colley Cibber (he said) was by no means
blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too
ich, he was in danger of losing that degree of
imation to which he was entitled."

In a party at Mr. Thrale's, a gentleman attacked
rrick for being vain:—*J.* " No wonder, Sir,
t he is vain; a man who is perpetually flatter-
in every mode that can be conceived. So
ny bellows have blown the fire, that one
nders he is not by this time become a cinder."
B. " And such bellows too. Lord Mansfield
h his cheeks like to burst: Lord Chatham like
Æolus. I have read such notes from them to
a as were enough to turn his head."—*J.*
True. When he whom every body else flatters
ters me, I then am truly happy."—Mrs.
RALE. " The sentiment is in Congreve, I
nk."—*J.* " Yes, Madam, in ' The Way of the
orld:'

" If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me."

To a lady who endeavoured to vindicate herself from blame for neglecting social attention to worthy neighbours, by saying, " I would go to them if it would do them any good;" he said, " What good, Madam, do you expect to have in your power to do them? It is shewing them respect, and that is doing them good."

Dr. Taylor once commended a physician who was known to him and Dr. Johnson, and said, " I fight many battles for him, as many people in the country dislike him."—*J.* " But you should consider, Sir, that by every one of your victories he is a loser; for every man of whom you get the better will be very angry and resolve not to employ him; whereas, if people get the better of you in argument about him, they'll think, 'We'll send for Dr. ****** nevertheless.'" This was an observation deep and sure in human nature.

On a certain occasion Johnson made a remark, " That the law against usury is for the protection of creditors as well as of debtors; for if there were no such check, people would be apt, from the temptation of great interest, to lend to desperate persons, by whom they would lose their money. Accordingly there are instances of ladies being ruined, by having injudiciously sunk their *fortunes* for high annuities, which, after a few

years, ceased to be paid, in consequence of the ruined circumstances of the borrower."

To Mr. B. (who had thoughts of binding himself to some practice by the obligation of a voluntary vow) he said, "Do not accustom yourself to enchain your volatility by vows; they will sometime leave a thorn in your mind which you will, perhaps, never be able to extract or eject. Take this warning, it is of great importance."

"The applause of a single human being is of great consequence."—"This (says Mr. B.) he observed to me with great earnestness of manner, very near the time of his decease, on occasion of having desired me to read a letter addressed to him from some person in the North of England; which, when I had done, and he asked me what the contents were; as I thought being particular upon it might fatigue him, it being of great length, I only told him in general that it was highly to his praise; and then he expressed himself as above."

He said of one of his friends—"He is ruining himself without pleasure. A man who loses at play, or who runs out his fortune at court, makes his estate less, in hopes of making it bigger: but it is a sad thing to pass through the quagmire of parsimony to the gulph of ruin. To pass over the flowery path of extravagance is very well."

Upon the question, whether a man who had

been guilty of vicious actions would do well to force himself into solitude and sadness, Johnson said, "No, Sir, unless it prevent him from being vicious again. With some people, gloomy penitence is only madness turned upside down. A man may be gloomy, till, in order to be relieved from gloom, he has recourse again to criminal indulgences."

Mr. Boswell once confessed an excess of which he had very seldom been guilty, namely, that he had spent a whole night in playing at cards, and that he could not look back on it with satisfaction. Instead of a harsh animadversion, Johnson mildly said, "Alas, Sir! on how few things can we look back with satisfaction!"—*B.* "By associating with you, Sir, I am always getting an accession of wisdom. But perhaps a man, after knowing his own character—the limited strength of his own mind, should not be desirous of having too much wisdom, considering, *quid valeant humeri*, how little he can carry."—*J.* "Sir, be as wise as you can; let a man be *aliis lætus, sapiens sibi:*

> 'Though pleas'd to see the dolphins play,
> I mind my compass and my way.'

You may be wise in your study in the morning, and gay in company at a tavern in the evening. Every man is to take care of his own wisdom and his own virtue, without minding too much what others think."

Talking of the great consequence which a man acquired by being employed in his profession, "I suggested (says Mr. B.) a doubt of the justice of the general opinion, that it is improper in a lawyer to solicit employment; for why, I urged, should it not be equally allowable to solicit that as the means of consequence as it is to solicit votes to be elected a member of parliament? Mr. Strahan had told me, that a countryman of his and mine, who had risen to eminence in the law, had, when first making his way, solicited him to get him employed in city causes."—*J.* "Sir, it is wrong to stir up law-suits; but when once it is certain that a law-suit is to go on, there is nothing wrong in a lawyer's endeavouring that he shall have the benefit rather than another."—*B.* "You would not solicit employment, Sir, if you were a lawyer."—*J.* "No, Sir; but not because I should think it wrong, but because I should disdain it." This was a good distinction, which will be felt by men of just pride.—He proceeded: "However, I would not have a lawyer to be wanting to himself in using fair means. I would have him to inject a little hint now and then, to prevent his being overlooked."

Against melancholy he recommended constant occupation of mind, a great deal of exercise, moderation in eating and drinking, and especially to

shun drinking at night. He said, melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery. He observed, that labouring men who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

On Mr. Boswell's succeeding to his paternal inheritance, it was not to be supposed that the great moralist would omit the opportunity of advising his friend. Accordingly, we find him thus addressing Mr. B.: "You have now a new station, and have therefore new cares and new employments. Life, as Cowley seems to say, ought to resemble a well-ordered poem; of which one rule generally received is, that the exordium should be simple, and should promise little. Begin your new course of life with the least show and the least expence possible; you may at your pleasure increase both, but you cannot easily diminish them. Do not think your estate your own while any man can call upon you for money which you cannot pay; therefore, begin with timorous parsimony. Let it be your first care not to be in any man's debt.

"When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the present life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct and maxims of prudence which one generation of men has transmitted to another; but upon a closer view, when

it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded by embarrassment and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue, it grows manifest that the boundless importance of the next life enforces some attention to the interests of this.

" Be kind to old servants, and secure the kindness of the agents and factors: do not disgust them by asperity, or unwelcome gaiety, or apparent suspicion. From them you must learn the real state of your affairs, the characters of your tenants, and the value of your lands.

" You have now a new character and new duties; think on them, and practise them.

" Make an impartial estimate of your revenue; and whatever it is, live upon less. Resolve never to be poor. Frugality is not only the basis of quiet, but of beneficence. No man can help others that wants help himself; we must have enough before we have to spare.

" Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable, and others extremely difficult."

Upon its being mentioned, that an opulent and very indolent Scotch nobleman, who totally resigned the management of his affairs to a man of knowledge and abilities, had claimed some merit

by saying, "The next best thing to managing a man's own affairs well, is being sensible of incapacity, and not attempting it, but having full confidence in one who can do it," Johnson said, "Nay, Sir, this is paltry. There is a middle course. Let a man give application; and depend upon it he will soon get above a despicable state of helplessness, and attain the power of acting for himself."

MANNERS.

JOHNSON had an utter abhorrence of affectation. Talking of old Mr. Langton, he said, "Sir, you will seldom see such a gentleman; such are his stores of literature; such his knowledge in divinity; and such his exemplary life: and, Sir (added he), he has no grimace, no gesticulation, no bursts of admiration on trivial occasions; he never embraces you with an overacted cordiality."

Being in company with a gentleman who affected to maintain Dr. Berkeley's strange position, "That nothing exists but as perceived by some mind;" when the gentleman was going away, Johnson said to him, "Pray, Sir, don't leave us; for we may, perhaps, forget to think of *you, and then you* will cease to exist."

An impudent fellow from Scotland was described to him, as affecting to be a savage, and railing at all established systems:—Johnson observed, "There is nothing surprizing in this. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogstye, as long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over."

It was added, that the same person maintained that there was no distinction between virtue and vice.—*J.* "Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks he is lying; and I see not what honour he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses, let us count our spoons. There is (said he) in human nature a general inclination to make people stare; and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why, make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare by being absurd. I may do it by going into a drawing-room without my shoes. You remember the gentleman in the Spectator, who had a commission of lunacy taken against him for his extreme singularity, such as never wearing a

wig, but a night-cap. Now, Sir, abstractedly the night-cap was best; but, relatively, the advantage was overbalanced by his making the boys run after him."

Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others, Johnson said, "Why, Sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, Sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose."—*B.* "But suppose now, Sir, that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offence for which he might be hanged."—*J.* "I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer."—*B.* "Would you eat your dinner that day, Sir?"—*J.* "Yes, Sir; and eat it as if he were eating it with me. Why, there's Baretti, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow, friends have risen up for him on every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of them will eat a slice of plumb pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind."

"I told him (says Mr. B.) that I had dined lately at Foote's, who shewed me a letter to him from Tom Davies, telling him that he had not been able to sleep from the concern which he felt an account of "*this sad affair of Baretti,*" beg-

ging of him to try if he could suggest any thing that might be of service; and, at the same time, recommending to him an industrious young man who kept a pickle-shop.—*J.* "Aye, Sir, here you have a specimen of human sympathy; a friend hanged, and a cucumber pickled. We know not whether Baretti or the pickle-man has kept Davies from sleep; nor does he know himself. And as to his not sleeping, Sir, Tom Davies is a very great man; Tom has been upon the stage, and knows how to do those things: I have not been upon the stage, and cannot do those things."—*B.* "I have often blamed myself, Sir, for not feeling for others as sensibly as many say they do."—*J.* "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*."

Of the late Mr. Fitzherbert, of Derbyshire, he said, "There was no sparkle, no brilliancy in Fitzherbert; but I never knew a man who was so generally acceptable. He made every body quite easy; overpowered nobody by the superiority of his talents; made no man think worse of himself by being his rival; seemed always to listen; did not oblige you to hear much from him; and did not oppose what you said. Every body liked him; but he had no friend, as I understand the word, nobody with whom he exchanged intimate

thoughts. People were willing to think well of every thing about him. A gentleman was making an affected rant, as many people do, of great feelings about 'his dear son,' who was at school near London; how anxious he was lest he might be ill, and what he would give to see him.—'Can't you (said Fitzherbert) take a post-chaise, and go to him?' This, to be sure, *finished* the affected man, but there was not much in it*. However, this was circulated as wit for a whole winter, and I believe part of a summer too; a proof that he was no very witty man. He was an instance of the truth of the observation, that a man will please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive; by never offending, than by giving a great deal of delight. In the first place, men hate more steadily than they love; and if I have said something to hurt a man once, I shall not get the better of this by saying many things to please him."

* The affected gentleman is understood to have been the late John Gilbert Cooper, Esq. author of a Life of Socrates, and of some poems in Dodsley's collection. Mr. Fitzherbert found him one morning, apparently, in such violent agitation, on account of the indisposition of his son, as to seem beyond the power of comfort. At length, however, he exclaimed, "I'll write an elegy." Mr. Fitzherbert, being satisfied by this of the sincerity of his emotions, slyly said, "Had not you better take a post-chaise, and go and see him." It was the shrewdness of the insinuation which made the story be circulated.

On another occasion Johnson remarked, "That pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist. No, Sir, I wish him to drive on."

On a very wet day, Mr. Boswell complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather; but Johnson said, "Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage; for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water; so that if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad; and men cannot labour so well in the open air in bad weather as in good: but, Sir, a smith or a taylor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather as in fair. Some very delicate frames, indeed, may be affected by wet weather, but not common constitutions."

One evening, when Johnson was somewhat fretful from illness, a gentleman asked him,

whether he had been abroad that day.—" Don't talk so childishly (said he), you may as well ask if I hanged myself to-day." Mr. B. mentioned politicks.—*J.* " Sir, I'd as soon have a man to break my bones as talk to me of public affairs, internal or external. I have lived to see things all as bad as they can be." He some time after observed, " That disease produces much selfishness. A man in pain is looking after ease; and lets most other things go as chance shall dispose of them."

To Mr. Boswell he once said, " You are always complaining of melancholy, and I conclude, from those complaints, that you are fond of it. No man talks of that which he is desirous to conceal, and every man desires to conceal that of which he is ashamed. Do not pretend to deny it—*manifestum habemus furem;* make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself never to mention your own mental diseases; if you are never to speak of them you will think on them but little; and if you think little of them they will molest you rarely. When you talk of them, it is plain that you want either praise or pity; for praise there is no room, and pity will do you no good; therefore, from this hour speak no more, think no more about them."

" I one day asked him (says his Biographer) if he was not dissatisfied with having so small a

share of wealth, and none of those distinctions in the State which are the objects of ambition. He had only a pension of three hundred a year. Why was he not in such circumstances as to keep his coach? Why had he not some considerable office?"—*J.* "Sir, I have never complained of the world; nor do I think that I have reason to complain. It is rather to be wondered at that I have so much. My pension is more out of the usual course of things than any instance that I have known. Here, Sir, was a man avowedly no friend to government at the time, who got a pension without asking for it. I never courted the great; they sent for me; but I think they now give me up. They are satisfied; they have seen enough of me." Upon my observing, that I could not believe this, for they must certainly be highly pleased by his conversation; conscious of his own superiority, he answered, "No, Sir; great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped." This was very expressive of the effect which the force of his understanding and brilliancy of his fancy could not but produce; and, to be sure, they must have found themselves strangely diminished in his company. When I warmly declared how happy I was at all times to hear him—"Yes, Sir (said he); but if you were lord chancellor it would not be so; you would then consider your own dignity."

He found great fault with a certain gentleman for keeping a bad table. "Sir (said he), when a man is invited to dinner, he is disappointed if he does not get something good. I advised Mrs. Thrale, who has no card parties at her house, to give sweetmeats, and such good things, in an evening, as are not commonly given, and she would find company enough come to her; for every body loves to have things which please the palate put in their way, without trouble or preparation." Such was his attention to the *minutiæ* of life and manners.

To the question, whether when a man knows that some of his intimate friends are invited to the house of another friend, with whom they are all equally intimate, he may join them without an invitation, Johnson answered, "No, Sir; he is not to go when he is not invited. They may be invited on purpose to abuse him" (smiling).

One of a company not being come at the appointed hour, Mr. Boswell proposed, as usual upon such occasions, to order dinner to be served; adding, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?"—"Why yes (answered Johnson, with a delicate humanity) if the one will suffer more by your sitting down, than the six will do by waiting."

Talking of the mode adopted by some to rise *in* the world by courting great men, and being

asked whether he had ever submitted to it, he said, " Why, Sir, I never was near enough to great men to court them. You may be prudently attached to great men, and yet independent; you are not to do what you think wrong, and you are to calculate, and not to pay too dear for what you get. You must not give a shilling's worth of court for sixpence worth of good; but if you can get a shilling's worth of good for sixpence worth of court, you are a fool if you do not pay court."

Being asked how far he thought wealth should be employed in hospitality, he answered, " You are to consider, that ancient hospitality, of which we hear so much, was in an uncommercial country, when men being idle were glad to be entertained at rich men's tables; but in a commercial country, in a busy country, time becomes precious, and therefore hospitality is not so much valued. No doubt there is still room for a certain degree of it; and a man has a satisfaction in seeing his friends eating and drinking around him: but promiscuous hospitality is not the way to gain real influence. You must help some people at table before others; you must ask some people how they like their wine oftener than others. You therefore offend more people than you please. You are like the French statesman who said when he granted a favour, ' *J'ai fait dix mécontents*

et un ingrat.' Besides, Sir, being entertained ever so well at a man's table, impresses no lasting regard or esteem. No, Sir, the way to make sure of power and influence is, by lending money confidentially to your neighbours at a small interest, or perhaps at no interest at all; and having their bonds in your possession."—BOSWELL. "May not a man, Sir, employ his riches to advantage in educating young men of merit?"—JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if they fall in your way; but if it be understood that you patronize young men of merit, you will be harassed with solicitations. You will have numbers forced upon you who have no merit; some will force them upon you from mistaken partiality; and some from downright interested motives, without scruple; and you will be disgraced. For hospitality as formerly practised, there is no longer the same reason; heretofore the poorer people were more numerous, and, from want of commerce, their means of getting a livelihood more difficult; therefore the supporting them was an act of great benevolence; now that the poor can find maintenance for themselves, and their labour is wanted, a general undiscerning hospitality tends to ill, by withdrawing them from their work to idleness and drunkenness. Then formerly rents were received in kind, so that there was a great *abundance* of provisions in possession of the own-

ers of the lands, which, since the plenty of money afforded by commerce, is no longer the case.

"Hospitality to strangers and foreigners in our country is now almost at an end, since, from the increase of them that come to us, there have been a sufficient number of people that have found an interest in providing inns and proper accommodations, which is in general a more expedient method for the entertainment of travellers. Where the travellers and strangers are few, more of that hospitality subsists, as it has not been worth while to provide places of accommodation. In Ireland there is still hospitality to strangers in some degree; in Hungary and Poland probably more."

Johnson's openness with people at a first interview was remarkable. He said once to Mr. Langton, "I think I am like Squire Richard in 'The Journey to London.' *I'm never strange in a strange place.*" He was truly *social.* He strongly censured what is much too common in England among persons of condition—maintaining an absolute silence, when unknown to each other; as for instance, when occasionally brought together in a room before the master or mistress of the house has appeared. "Two men of any other nation who are shewn into a room together, at a house where they are both visitors, will immediately find some conversation. But two Eng-

lishmen will probably go each to a different window, and remain in obstinate silence. Sir, we as yet do not enough understand the common rights of humanity."

An eminent foreigner, when he was shewn the British Museum, was very troublesome with many absurd enquiries. "Now there, Sir (said Johnson), is the difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman. A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows any thing of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say."

Johnson repeated an observation of Bathurst's, appearing to acknowledge it to be well founded, namely, "that it was somewhat remarkable how seldom, on occasion of coming into the company of any new person, one felt any wish or inclination to see him again."

Talking of that studied behaviour which many have recommended and practised, he disapproved of it, and said, "I never considered whether I should be a grave man, or a merry man, but just let inclination, for the time, have its course."

No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behaviour in those in whose company he happened to be than Johnson; or, however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements. Lord Eliot said, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner at a gentle-

man's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal, than accused of deficiency in *the graces*." Mr. Gibbon, who was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well, and lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, Madam (looking towards Johnson), that among *all* your acquaintance, you could find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to acquiesce.

The difference (he observed) between a well bred and an ill bred man is this: "One immediately attracts your liking, the other your aversion. You love the one till you find reason to hate him; you hate the other till you find reason to love him."

He said, "General Paoli had the loftiest port of any man he had ever seen." He denied that military men were always the best bred men. "Perfect good breeding, he observed, consists in having no particular mark of any profession, but a general elegance of manners; whereas in a military man, you can commonly distinguish the *brand* of a soldier, *l'homme d'epée*."

A foppish physician once reminded Johnson of his having been in company with him on a former occasion. "I do not remember it, Sir." The

physician still insisted, adding that he that day wore so fine a coat that it must have attracted his notice. "Sir (said Johnson), had you been dipt in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you."

Goldsmith one day, to divert some tedious minutes, strutted about, bragging of his dress, and perhaps was seriously vain of it, for his mind was wonderfully prone to such impressions. "Come, come (said Garrick, who was of the party), talk no more of that. You are perhaps the worst—eh, eh!"—Goldsmith was eagerly attempting to interrupt him, when Garrick went on, laughing ironically, "Nay, you will always *look* like a *gentleman*; but I am talking of being well or ill *drest*."—"Well, let me tell you (said Goldsmith) when my taylor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, Sir, I have a favour to beg of you. When any body asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, in Water-lane."—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour."

Johnson had called twice on the Bishop of Killaloe before his Lordship set out for Ireland, having missed him the first time. He said, "It would have hung heavy on my heart if I had not *seen him. No* man ever paid more attention to

another than he has done to me; and I have neglected him, not wilfully, but from being otherwise occupied. Always set a high value on *spontaneous kindness*. He, whose inclination prompts him to cultivate your friendship of his own accord, will love you more than one whom you have been at pains to attach to you."

Johnson said, that he was once much pleased to find that a carpenter, who lived near him, was very ready to shew him some things in his business, which he wished to see: "it was paying (he said) respect to literature."

Of the passion of love he remarked, "that its violence and ill effects were much exaggerated; for who knows any real sufferings on that head, more than from the exorbitancy of any other passion?"

Dr. Taylor's nose happening to bleed at a time when Johnson was with him, and Taylor saying, that it was because he had omitted to have himself blooded four days after a quarter of a year's interval, Johnson, who was a great dabbler in physic, disapproved much of periodical bleeding; "for (said he) you accustom yourself to an evacuation which Nature cannot perform of herself, and therefore she cannot help you, should you, from forgetfulness or any other cause, omit it; so you may be suddenly suffocated. You may accustom yourself to other periodical evacu-

ations, because, should you omit them, Nature can supply the omission; but Nature cannot open a vein to bleed you."—"I do not like to take an emetic (said Taylor) for fear of breaking some small vessels."—"Poh! (said Johnson) if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels." (blowing with high derision).

Having one day asked Mr. Langton if his father and mother had sat for their pictures, which he thought it right for each generation of a family to do, and being told that they had opposed it, he said, "Sir, among the anfractuosities of the human mind, I know not if it may not be one, that there is a superstitious reluctance to sit for a picture."

Talking of a friend of his associating with persons of very discordant principles and characters, Mr. B. said, that he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world.—JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; but one may be so much a man of the world as to be nothing in the world. I remember a passage in Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge: 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.'"—BOSWELL. "That was a fine passage."—*J.* "Yes, Sir; there was another fine passage too, which he *struck out*: 'When I was a young man, being

anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions: but I soon gave this over; for I found that generally what was new was false.'" Mr. B. said he did not like to sit with people of whom he had not a good opinion. —*J.* "But you must not indulge your delicacy too much; or you will be a *tête à tête* man all your life."

When Mr. Vesey was proposed as a member of the LITERARY CLUB, Mr. Burke began by saying that he was a man of gentle manners. "Sir (said Johnson), you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners, you have said enough."

The late Mr. Fitzherbert told Mr. Langton that Johnson said to him, "Sir, a man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing, than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down."

On some occasion he observed, "Though many men are nominally entrusted with the administration of hospitals and other public institutions, almost all the good is done by one man, by whom the rest are driven on; owing to confidence in him, and indolence in them."

Speaking of a gentleman whose house was much frequented by low company, "Rags (said he) will always make their appearance where they have a right to do it."

Of the same gentleman's mode of living, he said, "The servants, instead of doing what they are bid, stand round the table in idle clusters, gaping upon the guests; and seem as unfit to attend a company, as to steer a man of war."

He remarked, "that a man should pass a part of his time with *the laughers*, by which means any thing ridiculous or particular about him might be presented to his view, and corrected." Mr. Boswell observed, that he must have been a bold laugher who would have ventured to tell Dr. Johnson of any of his particularities.

"There is (said Johnson) a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he laid his hat it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug up their shoulders, and say, 'His memory is going.'"

Of a certain noble Lord, he said, "Respect him you could not; for he had no mind of his own; love him you could not; for that which you could do with him, every one else could."

Being asked by a young nobleman, what was become of the gallantry and military spirit of the old English nobility, he replied, "Why, my Lord, I'll tell you what is become of it; it is gone into the city to look for a fortune."

Speaking of a dull tiresome fellow, whom he chanced to meet, he said, "That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one."

To a correspondent who had been tardy in his communications, he wrote thus: "Are you playing the same trick again, and trying who can keep silence longest? Remember that all tricks are either knavish or childish; and that it is as foolish to make experiments upon the constancy of a friend, as upon the chastity of a wife. What can be the cause of this second fit of silence, I cannot conjecture; but after one trick, I will not be cheated by another, nor will harass my thoughts with conjectures about the motives of a man who probably acts only by caprice."

He one day observed to Sir William Scott, "The age is running mad after innovation; all the business of the world is to be done in a new way; men are to be hanged in a new way; Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation." It having been argued that this was an improvement, "No, Sir (said he eagerly), it is *not* an improvement: they object that the old method drew together a number of spectators;—Sir, executions are intended to draw spectators. If they do not draw spectators, they do not answer the purpose. The old method was most

satisfactory to all parties; the public was gratified by a procession; the criminal was supported by it. Why is all this to be swept away *?"

He said, "Mankind have a strong attachment to the habitations to which they have been accustomed. You see the inhabitants of Norway do not with one consent quit it, and go to some part of America, where there is a mild climate, and where they may have the same produce from land, with the tenth part of the labour. No, Sir; their affection for their old dwellings, and the terror of a general change, keep them at home. Thus we see many of the finest spots in the world thinly inhabited, and many rugged spots well inhabited."

"Madness (he said on some other occasion) frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as

* "I perfectly agree (says Mr. Boswell) with Dr. Johnson upon this head, and am persuaded that executions now, the solemn procession being discontinued, have not nearly the effect which they formerly had. Magistrates, both in London and elsewhere, have, I am afraid, in this had too much regard to their own ease."

Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

In a conversation on gaming, a gentleman animadverted on it with severity. "Nay, gentlemen (said Johnson), let us not aggravate the matter. It is not roguery to play with a man who is ignorant of the game, while you are master of it, and so win his money; for he thinks he can play better than you, as you think you can play better than he; and the superior skill carries it." ERSKINE. "He is a fool, but you are not a rogue." —JOHNSON. "That's much about the truth, Sir. It must be considered, that a man who only does what every one of the society to which he belongs would do, is not a dishonest man. In the republic of Sparta it was agreed, that stealing was not dishonourable, if not discovered. I do not commend a society where there is an agreement that what would not otherwise be fair, shall be fair; but I maintain, that an individual of any society, who practises what is allowed, is not a dishonest man."—BOSWELL. "So then, Sir, you do not think ill of a man who wins perhaps forty thousand pounds in a winter?"—*J.* "Sir, I do not call a gamester a dishonest man; but I call him an unsocial man, an unprofitable man. Gaming is a mode of transferring property without producing any intermediate good. Trade gives employ-

ment to numbers, and so produces intermediate good."

Talking of a gentleman who was supposed to be gradually involving his circumstances by bad management, Johnson said to Mr. B. "Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, they'd stop it. You must speak to him. It is really miserable. Were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich; but he has neither spirit to spend, nor resolution to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it; he has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die; to bleed to death, because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to stitch it up."

Once when checking Mr. Boswell for boasting too frequently of himself in company, he said, "Boswell, you often vaunt so much as to provoke ridicule. You put me in mind of a man who was standing in the kitchen of an inn with his back to the fire, and thus accosted the person next him: 'Do you know, Sir, who I am?' 'No, Sir (said the other), I have not that advantage.'—'Sir (said he), I am the *great Twalmley* who invented

the New Floodgate box-iron.'" The Bishop of Killaloe on hearing the story defended Twalmley, by observing, that he was entitled to the epithet of *great;* for Virgil in his groupe of worthies in the Elysian fields—

Hic manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi, &c.

mentions

Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes.

Mr. Boswell mentioned a young man who was going to Jamaica with his wife and children, in expectation of being provided for by two of her brothers settled in that island, one a clergyman, and the other a physician. "It is (said Johnson) a wild scheme, Sir, unless he has a positive and deliberate invitation. There was a poor girl, who used to come about me, who had a cousin in Barbadoes, that, in a letter to her, expressed a wish she would come out to that Island, and expatiated on the comforts and happiness of her situation. The poor girl went out: her cousin was much surprised, and asked her how she could think of coming. 'Because (said she) you invited me.'—'Not I,' answered the cousin. The letter was then produced. 'I see it is true (said she) that I did invite you: but I did not think you would come.' They lodged her in an out-house, where she passed her time miserably: and as soon

as she had an opportunity, she returned to England. Always tell this, when you hear of people going abroad to relations, upon a notion of being well received. In the case which you mention, it is probable the clergyman spends all he gets, and the physician does not know how much he is to get."

On another occasion Johnson observed, "A man is very apt to complain of the ingratitude of those who have risen far above him. A man when he gets into a higher sphere, into other habits of life, cannot keep up all his former connections. Then, Sir, those who knew him formerly upon a level with themselves, may think that they ought still to be treated as on a level, which cannot be; and an acquaintance in a former situation may bring out things which it would be very disagreeable to have mentioned before higher company, though, perhaps, every body knows of them." —He placed this subject in a new light, and shewed that a man who has risen in the world must not be condemned too harshly for being distant to former acquaintance, even though he may have been much obliged to them. It is, no doubt, to be wished (as Mr. B. justly remarks) that a proper degree of attention should be shewn by great men to their early friends; but if either from obtuse insensibility to difference of situation, or presumptuous forwardness, which will not

submit even to an exterior observance of it, the dignity of high place cannot be preserved, when they are admitted into the company of those raised above the state in which they once were, encroachment must be repelled, and the kinder feelings sacrificed.

A question was started, how far people who disagree in a capital point can live in friendship together. Johnson said they might. Goldsmith said they could not, as they had not the *idem velle atque idem nolle*—the same likings and the same aversions.—*J.* "Why, Sir, you must shun the subject as to which you disagree. For instance, I can live very well with Burke; I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation; but I would not talk to him of the Rockingham party."—*G.* "But, Sir, when people live together who have something as to which they disagree, and which they want to shun, they will be in the situation mentioned in the story of Bluebeard, 'you may look into all the chambers but one;' but we should have the greatest inclination to look into that chamber; to talk of that subject."—*J.* (with a loud voice) "Sir, I am not saying that *you* could live in friendship with a man from whom you differ as to some point; I am only saying that *I* could do it."

On the casuistical question, whether it was

allowable at any time to depart from *Truth*? Johnson observed, "The general rule is, that Truth should never be violated, because it is of the utmost importance to the comfort of life, that we should have a full security by mutual faith; and occasional inconveniencies should be willingly suffered that we may preserve it. There must, however, be some exceptions.—If, for instance, a murderer should ask you which way a man is gone, you may tell him what is not true, because you are under a previous obligation not to betray a man to a murderer."—BOSWELL. "Supposing the person who wrote *Junius* were asked whether he was the author, might he deny it?"—*J.* "I don't know what to say to this. If you were *sure* that he wrote *Junius*, would you, if he denied it, think as well of him afterwards? Yet it may be urged, that what a man has no right to ask, you may refuse to communicate; and there is no other effectual mode of preserving a secret, and an important secret, the discovery of which may be very hurtful to you, but by a flat denial; for if you are silent, or hesitate, or evade, it will be held equivalent to a confession. But stay, Sir: here is another case. Supposing the author had told me confidentially that he had written *Junius*, and I were asked if he had, I should hold myself at liberty to deny it, as being under a previous promise, express or implied, to con-

ceal it. Now what I ought to do for the author, may I not do for myself? But I deny the lawfulness of telling a lie to a sick man, for fear of alarming him. You have no business with consequences; you are to tell the truth. Besides, you are not sure what effect your telling him that he is in danger may have. It may bring his distemper to a crisis, and that may cure him. Of all lying, I have the greatest abhorrence of this, because I believe it has been frequently practised on myself*."

Johnson's notion of the duty of a member of Parliament, sitting upon an election-committee, was very high; and when he was told of a gentleman upon one of those committees, who read the newspapers part of the time, and slept the rest, while the merits of a vote were examined by the counsel, and as an excuse, when challenged

* "I cannot help thinking (says Mr. B.) that there is much weight in the opinion of those who have held, that Truth, as an eternal and immutable principle, ought upon no account whatever to be violated, from supposed previous or superior obligations, of which every man being to judge for himself, there is great danger that we too often, from partial motives, persuade ourselves that they exist; and probably whatever extraordinary instances may sometimes occur, where some evil may be prevented by violating this noble principle, it would be found that human happiness would, upon the whole, be more perfect were Truth universally p[illegible]ed."

by the chairman for such behaviour, bluntly answered, "I had made up my mind upon that case;" —Johnson, with an indignant contempt, said, "If he was such a rogue as to make up his mind upon a case without hearing it, he should not have been such a fool as to tell it."—"I think (said a gentleman present) the Doctor has pretty plainly made him out to be both rogue and fool."

Talking of public speaking, Johnson said, "We must not estimate a man's powers by his being able or not able to deliver his sentiments in public. Isaac Hawkins Browne, one of the first wits of this country, got into Parliament, and never opened his mouth. For my own part, I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak, than to try it, and fail; as it is more disgraceful not to fight, than to fight and be beaten."—This argument appeared to Mr. Boswell to be fallacious; for if a man has not spoken, it may be said that he would have done very well, if he had tried; whereas, if he has tried and failed, there is nothing to be said for him. "Why then (he asked) is it thought disgraceful for a man not to fight, and not disgraceful not to speak in public?" —*J.* "Because there may be other reasons for a man's not speaking in public than want of resolution: he may have nothing to say (laughing). Whereas, Sir, you know c[illegible]ge is reckoned

the greatest of all virtues; because, unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other."

The conversation turned upon war. Johnson said, "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea."—BOSWELL. "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON. "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of General Officers and Admirals who have been in service, he would shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table."—*B.* "No; he'd think he could *try* them all."—*J.* "Yes, if he could catch them; but they'd try him much sooner. No, Sir; were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture in philosophy;' and Charles, laying his hand on his sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar;' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is universal: yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the utmost extremity of human misery; such crowding, such filth, such stench!"—*B.* "Yet sailors are happy."—*J.* "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh meat, with the grossest sensuality. But, Sir, the profession of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind reverence those who have got over fear,

which is so general a weakness."—SCOTT. "But is not courage mechanical, and to be acquired?" —*J.* "Why, yes, Sir, in a collective sense. Soldiers consider themselves only as parts of a great machine."—*S.* "We find people fond of being sailors."—*J.* "I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of imagination."

His abhorrence of the profession of a sailor was uniformly violent; but in conversation he always exalted the profession of a soldier.

Talking of fame, for which there is so great a desire, Mr. Boswell observed how little there was of it in reality, compared with the other objects of human attention. "Let every man recollect, and he will be sensible how small a part of his time is employed in talking or thinking of Shakespeare, Voltaire, or any of the most celebrated men that have ever lived, or are now supposed to occupy the attention and admiration of the world. Let this be extracted and compressed; into what a narrow space will it go!" He then slily introduced Mr. Garrick's fame, and his assuming the airs of a great man.—JOHNSON. "Sir, it is wonderful how *little* Garrick assumes. No, Sir, Garrick *fortunam reverenter habet.* Consider, Sir: celebrated men, such as you have mentioned, have had their applause at a distance; but Garrick had it dashed in his face, sounded in his

ears, and went home every night with the plaudits of a thousand in his *cranium*. Then, Sir, Garrick did not *find*, but *made* his way to the tables, the levees, and almost the bed-chambers of the great. Then, Sir, Garrick had under him a numerous body of people; who, from fear of his power, hopes of his favour, and admiration of his talents, were constantly submissive to him. And here is a man who has advanced the dignity of his profession. Garrick has made a player a higher character."—SCOTT. "And he is a very sprightly writer too."—*J.* "Yes, Sir; and all this supported by great wealth of his own acquisition. If all this had happened to me, I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me, to knock down every body that stood in the way. Consider, if all this had happened to Cibber or Quin, they'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to *us* (smiling)."—*B.* "And Garrick is a very good man, a charitable man."—*J.* "Sir, a liberal man. He has given away more money than any man in England. There may be a little vanity mixed; but he has shewn that money is not his first object."—*B.* "Yet Foote used to say of him, that he walked out with an intention to do a generous action; but, turning the corner of a street, he met with the ghost of a halfpenny, which frightened him."—*J.* "Why, Sir, that is very true, too; for I never

knew a man of whom it could be said with less certainty to-day, what he will do to-morrow, than Garrick; it depends so much on his humour at the time."—*S.* "I am glad to hear of his liberality. He has been represented as very saving."—*J.* "With his domestic saving we have nothing to do. I remember drinking tea with him long ago, when Peg Woffington made it, and he grumbled at her for making it too strong. He had then begun to feel money in his purse, and did not know when he should have enough of it."

Talking of employment being absolutely necessary to preserve the mind from wearying and growing fretful, especially in those who have a tendency to melancholy, a saying was mentioned of an American savage, who, when an European was expatiating on all the advantages of money, put this question, "Will it purchase *occupation?*"—JOHNSON. "Depend upon it, Sir, this saying is too refined for a savage. And, Sir, money *will* purchase occupation; it will purchase all the conveniencies of life; it will purchase variety of company; it will purchase all sorts of entertainment."

Mr. Boswell spoke of the difficulty of rising in the morning. Dr. Johnson told him, "that the learned Mrs. Carter, at that period when she was eager in study, did not awake as early as she wished; and she therefore had a contrivance,

that, at a certain hour, her chamber-light should burn a string to which a heavy weight was suspended, which then fell with a strong sudden noise: this roused her from sleep, and then she had no difficulty in getting up." But Mr. B. said, *that* was his difficulty; and wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which he never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there might be something in the stores of nature which could do this. He would have something that could dissipate the *vis inertiæ*, and give elasticity to the muscles *.

Johnson observed, that " a man should take a sufficient quantity of sleep, which Dr. Mead says is between seven and nine hours." He was told, that Dr. Cullen had said, that a man should not take more sleep than he can take at once.— " This rule, Sir (remarked Johnson), cannot hold in all cases; for many people have their sleep broken by sickness; and surely, Cullen would not have a man to get up after having slept but an

* " As I imagine (says Mr. B.) that the human body may be put, by the operation of other substances, into any state in which it has ever been; and as I have experienced a state in which rising from bed was not disagreeable, but easy, nay, sometimes agreeable; I suppose that this state may be produced, if we knew by what. We can heat the body, we can cool it; we can give it tension or relaxation; and surely it is possible to bring it into a state in which rising from bed will not be a pain."

hour. Such a regimen would soon end in a *long sleep.*" Dr. Taylor remarked, that "a man who does not feel an inclination to sleep at the ordinary time, instead of being stronger than other people, must not be well; for a man in health has all the natural inclinations to eat, drink, and sleep, in a strong degree." . . . .

At a supper once Johnson talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people (said he) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind any thing else." He now appeared *Jean Bull Philosophe*, and was, for the moment, not only serious but vehement.—"Yet (adds Mr. Boswell) I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his Rambler is a masterly essay against gulosity.—His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this subject; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment: his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the

least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite, which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious*, was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately. He told me, that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once. They who beheld with wonder how much he ate upon all occasions when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he ate, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember, when he was in Scotland, his praising '*Gordon's palates*,' (a dish of palates at the Honourable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have

done honour to more important subjects. 'As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt.' He about the same time was so much displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, 'I'd throw such a rascal into the river;' and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: 'I, Madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, Madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge.' When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, 'This was a good dinner enough, to be sure; but it was not a dinner to ask a man to.' On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind.—One day, when he had dined with his neighbour and landlord in Bolt-court, Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in every thing, he pronounced this eulogy, 'Sir, we could not have had a better dinner had there been a *Synod of Cooks*.'"

He usually defended luxury: "You cannot (said he) spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do more good to them by spending it in luxury than by giving it; for by spending it in luxury you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle. I own, indeed, there may be more virtue in giving it immediately in charity than in spending it in luxury, though there may be pride in that too." Miss Seward, who was present, asked if this was not Mandeville's doctrine of "private vices public benefits."—JOHNSON. "The fallacy of that book is, that Mandeville defines neither vices nor benefits. He reckons among vices every thing that gives pleasure. He takes the narrowest system of morality, monastic morality, which holds pleasure itself to be a vice; such as eating salt with our fish, because it makes it eat better; and he reckons wealth as a public benefit, which is by no means always true. Pleasure of itself is not a vice. Having a garden, which we all know to be perfectly innocent, is a great pleasure. At the same time, in this state of being, there are many pleasures vices, which however are so immediately agreeable that we can hardly abstain from them. The happiness of Heaven will be, that pleasure and virtue will be perfectly consistent. Mandeville puts the case of a man who gets

drunk at an alehouse; and says it is a public benefit, because so much money is got by it to the public. But it must be considered, that all the good gained by this, through the gradation of alehouse-keeper, brewer, maltster, and farmer, is overbalanced by the evil caused to the man and his family by his getting drunk. This is the way to try what is vicious, by ascertaining whether more evil than good is produced by it upon the whole, which is the case in all vice. It may happen that good is produced by vice but not as vice; for instance, a robber may take money from its owner, and give it to one who will make a better use of it. Here is good produced; but not by the robbery as robbery, but as translation of property. I read Mandeville forty, or, I believe, fifty years ago. He did not puzzle me; he opened my views into real life very much. No, it is clear that the happiness of society depends on virtue. In Sparta theft was allowed by general consent; theft, therefore, was *there* not a crime, but then there was no security; and what a life must they have had when there was no security. Without truth there must be a dissolution of society. As it is, there is so little truth that we are almost afraid to trust our ears; but how should we be if falsehood were multiplied ten times? Society is held together by communica-

tion and information; and I remember this remark of Sir Thomas Brown's, 'Do the devils lie? No; for then Hell could not subsist.'"

"Many things which are false are transmitted from book to book, and gain credit in the world. One of these is the cry against the evil of luxury. Now the truth is, that luxury produces much good. Take the luxury of buildings in London. Does it not produce real advantages in the conveniency and elegance of accommodation, and this all from the exertion of industry? People will tell you, with a melancholy face, how many builders are in gaol. It is plain they are in gaol, not for building; for rents are not fallen. A man gives half a guinea for a dish of green peas. How much gardening does this occasion? how many labourers must the competition to have such things early in the market keep in employment? You will hear it said, very gravely, "Why was not the half-guinea, thus spent in luxury, given to the poor? To how many might it have afforded a good meal. Alas! has it not gone to the industrious poor, whom it is better to support than the idle poor? You are much surer that you are doing good when you *pay* money to those who work, as the recompence of their labour, than when you *give* money merely in charity. Suppose the ancient luxury of a dish of peacock's brains were to be revived, how

many carcases would be left to the poor at a cheap rate? And as to the rout that is made about people who are ruined by extravagance, it is no matter to the nation that some individuals suffer. When so much general productive exertion is the consequence of luxury, the nation does not care though there are debtors in gaol; nay, they would not care though their creditors were there too."

DUELLING.

Mr. Boswell, in a conversation with General Oglethorpe, Johnson, and Goldsmith, started the question whether duelling was consistent with moral duty. The brave old General fired at this, and said, with a lofty air, "Undoubtedly a man has a right to defend his honour."—Goldsmith (turning to Mr. B.) "I ask you first, Sir, what would you do if you were affronted?" He answered that he should think it necessary to fight.—"Why then (replied Goldsmith) that solves the question."—Johnson. "No, Sir, it does not solve the question. It does not follow that what a man would do is therefore right."—Mr. *B.* "I wished to have it settled whether duelling was contrary to the laws of Christianity." Johnson

immediately entered on the subject, and treated it in a masterly manner. His thoughts were these: "As men become in a high degree refined, various causes of offence arise, which are considered to be of such importance, that life must be staked to atone for them, though in reality they are not so. A body that has received a very fine polish may be easily hurt. Before men arrive at that artificial refinement, if one tells his neighbour he lies, his neighbour tells him he lies; if one gives his neighbour a blow, his neighbour gives him a blow: but in a state of highly polished society, an affront is held to be a serious injury. It must, therefore, be resented, or rather a duel must be fought upon it; as men have agreed to banish from their society one who puts up with an affront without fighting a duel. Now, Sir, it is never unlawful to fight in self defence. He, then, who fights a duel, does not fight from passion against his antagonist, but out of self defence, to avert the stigma of the world, and to prevent himself from being driven out of society. I could wish there was not that superfluity of refinement; but while such notions prevail, no doubt a man may lawfully fight a duel."

This justification is applicable only to the person who *receives* an affront. All mankind must condemn the aggressor.

The General said, that when he was a very

young man, only fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene of Savoy, he was sitting in a company at table with a Prince of Wirtemberg. The Prince took up a glass of wine, and, by a fillip, made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was a nice dilemma. To have challenged him instantly might have fixed a quarrelsome character upon the young soldier; to have taken no notice of it might have been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince, and smiling all the time, as if he took what his Highness had done in jest, said, in French, "That's a good joke; but we do it much better in England;" and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old General who sat by, said, '*Il a bien fait; mon Prince, vous l'avez commencé;*' and thus all ended in good humour.

At another time Johnson defended duelling, and put his argument upon what is perhaps the most solid basis; namely, that if public war be allowed to be consistent with morality, private war must be equally so*.

* "Indeed (says Mr. Boswell) we may observe what strained arguments are used to reconcile war with the Christian religion. But, in my opinion, it is exceedingly clear, that duelling, having better reasons for its barbarous violence, is more justifiable than war, in which thousands go forth, without any cause of personal quarrel, and massacre each other."

WOMEN.

JOHNSON thought portrait-painting an improper employment for a woman. "Public practice of any art (he observed), and staring in men's faces, is very indelicate in a female."

He remarked once, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, "that a beggar in the street will more readily ask alms from a *man*, though there should be no marks of wealth in his appearance, than from even a well-dressed *woman;* which he accounted for from the greater degree of carefulness as to money that is to be found in women; saying farther upon it, that the opportunities in general that they possess of improving their condition are much fewer than men have; and adding, as he looked round the comapny, which consisted of men only, there is not one of us who does not think he might be richer if he would use his endeavour."

He talked with serious concern of a certain female friend's "laxity of narration, and inattention to truth."—"I am as much vexed (said he) at the ease with which she hears it mentioned to her, as at the thing itself. I told her, 'Madam, you are contented to hear every day said to you, what the highest of mankind have died rather than

bear.'—You know, Mr. Boswell, the highest of mankind have died rather than bear to be told they have uttered a falsehood. Do talk to her of it: I am weary."

The wife of one of his acquaintance had fraudulently made a purse for herself out of her husband's fortune. Feeling a proper compunction in her last moments, she confessed how much she had secreted; but before she could tell where it was placed, she was seized with a convulsive fit, and expired. Her husband said, he was more hurt by her want of confidence in him than by the loss of his money. "I told him (said Johnson) that he should console himself; for *perhaps* the money might be *found*, and he was *sure* that his wife was *lost*."

Mr. Boswell once stated to him this case:—"Suppose a man has a daughter, who he knows has been seduced, but her misfortune is concealed from the world, should he keep her in his house? Would he not, by doing so, be accessary to imposition? And, perhaps, a worthy unsuspecting man might come and marry this woman, unless the father inform him of the truth."—Johnson replied, "Sir, he is accessary to no imposition. His daughter is in his house; and if a man courts her, he takes his chance.—If a friend, or, indeed, if any man asks his opinion whether he should marry her, he ought to advise

him against it, without telling why, because his real opinion is then required. Or, if he has other daughters who know of her frailty, he ought not to keep her in his house. You are to consider, the state of life is this; we are to judge of one another's characters as well as we can; and a man is not bound, in honesty or honour, to tell us the faults of his daughter or of himself. A man who has debauched his friend's daughter is not obliged to say to every body—' Take care of me; don't let me into your houses without suspicion. I once debauched a friend's daughter. I may debauch yours.' "

As Johnson was a zealous friend of subordination, he was at all times watchful to repress the vulgar cant against the manners of the great.— " High people, Sir (said he), are the best.—Take a hundred ladies of quality, you'll find them better wives, better mothers, more willing to sacrifice their own pleasure to their children, than a hundred other women. Tradeswomen (I mean the wives of tradesmen) in the city, who are worth from ten to fifteen thousand pounds, are the worst creatures upon the earth; grossly ignorant, and thinking viciousness fashionable. Farmers, I think, are often worthless fellows. — Few lords will cheat; and, if they do, they'll be ashamed of it; farmers cheat, and are not ashamed of it: they have all the sensual vices, too, of the nobility,

with cheating into the bargain. There is as much fornication and adultery amongst farmers as amongst noblemen."—*B.* "The notion of the world, Sir, however, is, that the morals of women of quality are worse than those in lower stations."—*J.* "Yes, Sir; the licentiousness of one woman of quality makes more noise than that of a number of women in lower stations. Then, Sir, you are to consider the malignity of women in the city against women of quality, which will make them believe any thing of them, such as that they call their coachmen to their bed. No, Sir; so far as I have observed, the higher in rank, the richer ladies are, they are the better instructed, and the more virtuous."

INEQUALITIES OF RANK.

JOHNSON insisted much on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank.—"Sir (said he), I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he *Sam.* Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in

this town, a great republican. One day, when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, shewed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" A certain author was mentioned, who disgusted by his forwardness, and by shewing no deference to noblemen into whose company he was admitted. Johnson said, "Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a lord, how would he stare!—'Why, Sir, do you stare? (says the shoemaker). I do great service to society. 'Tis true, I am paid for doing it; but so are you, Sir: and I am sorry to say it, better paid than I am, for doing something not so necessary; for mankind could do better without your books, than without my shoes.' Thus there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for

the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental."

On another occasion (says Mr. B.) we had talked of old families, and the respect due to them. Johnson said, "Sir, you have a right to that kind of respect, and are arguing for yourself. I am for supporting the principle, and am disinterested in doing it, as I have no such right."—*B.* "Why, Sir, it is one more incitement to a man to do well."—*J.* "Yes, Sir, and it is a matter of opinion very necessary to keep society together. What is it but opinion by which we have a respect for authority, that prevents us, who are the rabble, from rising up, and pulling down you who are gentlemen from your places, and saying, 'We will be gentlemen in our turn!' Now, Sir, that respect for authority is much more easily granted to a man whose father has had it, than to an upstart; and so society is more easily supported."—*B.* "Perhaps, Sir, it might be done by the respect belonging to office, as among the Romans, where the dress, the *toga*, inspired reverence."—*J.* "Why, we know very little about the Romans. But, surely, it is much easier to respect a man who has always had respect, than to respect a man who we know was last year no better than ourselves, and will be no better next year. In republics there is not a respect for authority, but a fear of power."—*B.* "At present,

Sir, I think riches seem to gain most respect."—*J.* "No, Sir, riches do not gain hearty respect; they only procure external attention. A very rich man, from low beginnings, may buy his election in a borough; but, *cæteris paribus*, a man of family will be preferred. People will prefer a man for whose father their fathers have voted, though they should get no more money, or even less. This shews that the respect for family is not merely fanciful, but has an actual operation. If gentlemen of family would allow the rich upstarts to spend their money profusely, which they are ready enough to do, and not vie with them in expence, the upstarts would soon be at an end, and the gentlemen would remain: but if the gentlemen will vie in expence with the upstarts, which is very foolish, they must be ruined."

Johnson, indeed, though of no high extraction himself, had much respect for birth and family, especially among ladies. "Adventitious accomplishments (said he) may be possessed by all ranks; but one may easily distinguish the *born gentlewoman*."

One evening at Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Chambers's in the temple, he talked with a noble enthusiasm of keeping up the representation of respectable families. His zeal on this subject was a circumstance in his character exceedingly remarkable, when it is considered that he had no

pretensions to blood. He himself once said, "I have great merit in being zealous for subordination and the honours of birth; for I can hardly tell who was my grandfather." He maintained the dignity and propriety of male succession, in opposition to the opinion of one who had that day employed Mr. Chambers to draw his will, devising his estate to his three sisters, in preference to a remote heir male. Johnson called them 'three *dowdies*,' and said, with as high a spirit as the boldest Baron in the most perfect days of the feudal system, "An ancient estate should always go to males. It is mighty foolish to let a stranger have it because he marries your daughter, and takes your name. As for an estate newly acquired by trade, you may give it, if you will, to the dog *Towser*, and let him keep his *own* name."

"Providence (he observed at another time) has wisely ordered that the more numerous men are, the more difficult it is for them to agree in any thing; and so they are governed. There is no doubt, that if the poor should reason,—'We'll be the poor no longer, we'll make the rich take their turn,' they could easily do it, were it not that they can't agree. So the common soldiers, though so much more numerous than their officers, are governed by them for the same reason."

Some one told him, that Mrs. Macaulay wonder-

ed how he could reconcile his political principles with his moral; his notions of inequality and subordination with wishing well to the happiness of all mankind, who might live so agreeably, had they all their portions of land, and none to domineer over another. "Why, Sir (said he), I reconcile my principles very well, because mankind are happier in a state of inequality and subordination. Were they to be in this pretty state of equality, they would soon degenerate into brutes;—they would become Monboddo's nation; their tails would grow. Sir, all would be losers, were all to work for all:—they would have no intellectual improvement. All intellectual improvement arises from leisure: all leisure arises from one working for another."

On another occasion he said, "So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other."

Mrs. Williams (said he one day) was angry that Thrale's family did not send regularly to her every time they heard from me while I was in the Hebrides. Little people are apt to be jealous; but they should not be jealous; for they ought to consider, that superior attention will necessarily be paid to superior fortune or rank. Two persons may have equal merit, and on that

account may have an equal claim to attention; but one of them may have also fortune and rank, and so may have a double claim."

When Rousseau's treatise on the inequality of mankind was a fashionable topick, it gave rise to an observation of Mr. Dempster, in a conversation with Johnson, that the advantages of fortune and rank were nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit.—"If man (said Johnson) were a savage, living in the woods by himself, this might be true; but in civilized society we all depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, Sir, in civilized society, external advantages make us more respected. A man with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one. Sir, you may analyse this, and say what is there in it? But that will avail you nothing; for it is part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's church into atoms, and consider any single atom; it is, to be sure, good for nothing: but put all these atoms together, and you have St. Paul's church. So it is with human felicity, which is made up of many ingredients, each of which may be shewn to be very insignificant. In civilized society, personal merit will not serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the experiment. Go into the street, and give one man

a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir William Petty fixes your allowance at three pounds a year; but as times are much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide. Now, Sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow creatures. And, Sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness, than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on, as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *cæteris paribus*, he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used (and it is a man's own fault if they are not), must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty. When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate, because most ingenious things, that is to

say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, Sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, Sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. —When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, shew it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people labouring to convince you that you may live very happily on a plentiful fortune. So you hear people talking how miserable a king must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place."

It was suggested, that kings must be unhappy,

because they are deprived of the greatest of all satisfactions, easy and unreserved society. Johnson said, "That is an all-founded notion. Being a king does not exclude a man from such society. Great kings have always been social. The King of Prussia, the only great king at present, is very social. Charles the Second, the last King of England, who was a man of parts, was social; and our Henrys and Edwards were all social."

Mr. Dempster having endeavoured to maintain, that intrinsic merit ought to make the only distinction amongst mankind, Johnson observed, "Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it.—Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all

upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure."

Mr. Boswell said, he considered distinction of rank to be of so much importance in civilized society, that if he were asked on the same day to dine with the first duke in England, and with the first man in Britain for genius, he should hesitate which to prefer.—" To be sure, Sir (said Johnson), if you were to dine only once, and it were never to be known where you dined, you would choose rather to dine with the first man for genius; but to gain most respect, you should dine with the first duke in England. For nine people in ten that you meet with, would have a higher opinion of you for having dined with a duke; and the great genius himself would receive you better, because you had been with the great duke."

He took care to guard himself against any possible suspicion that his settled principles of reverence for rank and respect for wealth were at all owing to mean or interested motives; for he asserted his own independence as a literary man. " No man (said he) who ever lived by literature, has lived more independently than I have done." He said he had taken longer time than he needed to have done in composing his Dictionary.

In an eloquent argument he maintained that

the situation of Prince of Wales was the happiest of any person's in the kingdom, even beyond that of the Sovereign. Among other things he mentioned the enjoyment of hope,—the high superiority of rank, without the anxious cares of government,—a great degree of power, both from natural influence wisely used, and from the sanguine expectations of those who look forward to the chance of future favour.

LAW.

When Mr. Boswell meditated trying his fortune in Westminster Hall, Johnson said to him, "You must not indulge too sanguine hopes, should you be called to our bar. I was told, by a very sensible lawyer, that there are a great many chances against any man's success in the profession of the law; the candidates are so numerous, and those who get large practice so few." He said, it was by no means true that a man of good parts and application is sure of having business, though he, indeed, allowed that if such a man could but appear in a few causes, his merit would be known, and he would get forward; but that the great risk was, that a man might pass half a life-time in the Courts, and never have an opportunity of shewing his abilities.

" I asked him (says Mr. Boswell on another occasion) whether as a moralist he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty."—JOHNSON. " Why no, Sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion: you are not to tell lies to a judge." —BOSWELL. " But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad?"—*J.* " Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the Judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning; must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, Sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself, may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why, then, Sir, you are wrong, and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the Judge's opinion."—*B.* " But, Sir, does not affecting a warmth when you have no warmth, and appearing to be clearly of opinion when you are in reality of another opinion, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not *some* danger that a lawyer may put on the same

mask in common life, in the intercourse with his friends?"—*J.* "Why no, Sir; every body knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client, and it is therefore properly no dissimulation; the moment you come from the bar you resume your usual behaviour. Sir, a man will no more carry the artifice of the bar into the common intercourse of society, than a man who is paid for tumbling upon his hands will continue tumbling upon his hands when he should walk on his feet."

Of entails he said, "They are good because it is good to preserve in a country a succession of men to whom the people are accustomed to look up as to their leaders. But I am for leaving a quantity of land in commerce to excite industry, and keep money in the country; for if no land were to be bought in the country, there would be no encouragement to acquire wealth, because a family could not be founded there; or if it were acquired, it must be carried away to another country where land may be bought. And although the land in every country will remain the same, and be as fertile where there is no money, as where there is, yet all that portion of the happiness of civil life, which is produced by money circulating in a country, would be lost." Mr. Boswell asking whether it would be for the advantage of a country that all its lands were sold at once, Johnson answered, "So far, Sir, as

money produces good, it would be an advantage; for then that country would have as much money circulating in it as it is worth; but to be sure this would be counterbalanced by the disadvantages attending a total change of proprietors."

Mr. Boswell expressed his opinion, that the power of entailing should be limited thus: "That there should be one third, or perhaps one half, of the land of a country kept free for commerce; that the proportion allowed to be entailed should be parcelled out so that no family could entail above a certain quantity. Let a family, according to the abilities of its representatives, be richer or poorer in different generations, or always rich if its representatives be always wise; but let its absolute permanency be moderate. In this way we should be certain of there being always a number of established roots; and as, in the course of nature, there is in every age an extinction of some families, there would be continual openings for men ambitious of perpetuity, to plant a stock in the entail ground."—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, mankind will be better able to regulate the system of entails, when the evil of too much land being locked up by them is felt, than we can do at present when it is not felt."

PLAYERS.

Dr. Johnson had thought more upon the subject of acting than might be generally supposed. Talking of it one day to Mr. Kemble, he said, "Are you, Sir, one of those enthusiasts who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?" Upon Mr. Kemble's answering that he had never felt so strong a persuasion himself; "To be sure not, Sir (said Johnson); the thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it."

He gave the following as his opinion upon the merits of some of the principal performers whom he remembered to have seen upon the stage: "Mrs. Porter, in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive in the sprightliness of humour, I have never seen equalled. What Clive did best, she did better than Garrick; but could not do half so many things well; she was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature."

Mrs. Pritchard being mentioned, he said, "Her playing was quite mechanical. It is wonderful how little mind she had. Sir, she had never read the tragedy of Macbeth all through.

She no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather, of which he is making a pair of shoes, is cut. Pritchard, in common life, was a vulgar idiot; she would talk of her *gownd;* but, when she appeared upon the stage, seemed to be inspired by gentility and understanding." He thought Colley Cibber ignorant of the principles of his art.

"Colley Cibber (said he) once consulted me as to one of his birth-day Odes, a long time before it was wanted. I objected very freely to several passages. Cibber lost patience, and would not read his Ode to an end. When we had done with criticism, we walked over to Richardson's, the author of 'Clarissa,' and I wondered to find Richardson displeased that I 'did not treat Cibber with more *respect.*' Now, Sir, to talk of *respect* for a *player!*" (smiling disdainfully).—BOSWELL. "There, Sir, you are always heretical; you never will allow merit to a player."—JOHNSON. "Merit, Sir; what merit? Do you respect a rope-dancer, or a ballad-singer?"—*B.* "No, Sir; but we respect a great player, as a man who can conceive lofty sentiments, and can express them gracefully."—*J.* "What, Sir, a fellow who claps a hump on his back, and a lump on his leg, and cries, '*I am Richard the Third?*' Nay, Sir, a ballad-singer is a higher man, for he does two

things; he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and musick in his performance: the player only recites."—*B.* "My dear Sir! you may turn any thing into ridicule. I allow that a player of farce is not entitled to respect; he does a little thing: but he who can represent exalted characters, and touch the noblest passions, has very respectable powers; and mankind have agreed in admiring great talents for the stage. We must consider, too, that a great player does what very few are capable of doing; his art is a very rare faculty. *Who* can repeat Hamlet's soliloquy, 'To be, or not to be,' as Garrick does it?"—*J.* "Any body may. Jemmy there (a boy about eight years old, who was in the room) will do it as well in a week."—*B.* "No, no, Sir; and as a proof of the merit of great acting, and of the value which mankind set upon it, Garrick has got a hundred thousand pounds."—*J.* "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence? That has been done by a scoundrel commissary. Garrick was no declaimer; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken 'To be, or not to be,' better than he did; yet he was the only actor I ever saw whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy; though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguishing excellencies." Having expatiated

with his usual force and eloquence on Garrick's extraordinary eminence as an actor, he concluded with this compliment to his social talents: "And after all, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table."

MUSICK.

JOHNSON once, in a musical party, desired to have 'Let Ambition fire thy Mind' played over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it; though he owned that he was very insensible to the power of musick. "I told him (says Mr. Boswell), that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle." "Sir (said he), I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool."

Another time, after having talked slightingly of musick, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, "Why don't you dash away like Burney?" Dr. Burney upon this said to him, "I believe, Sir,

we shall make a musician of you at last." Johnson with candid complacency replied, "Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me."

Mr. Langton and Johnson having gone to see a Freemason's funeral procession at Rochester, and some solemn musick being played on French horns, he said, "This is the first time that I have ever been affected by musical sounds; adding that the impression made upon him was of a melancholy kind." Mr. Langton said, that this effect was a fine one.—JOHNSON. "Yes, if it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good; but inasmuch as it is melancholy *per se* it is bad."

Talking of sounds, a gentleman in the company said there was no beauty in a simple sound, but only in an harmonious composition of sounds. Mr. Boswell differed from this opinion, and mentioned the soft and sweet sound of a fine woman's voice. JOHNSON. "No, Sir, if a serpent or a toad uttered it, you would think it ugly."—BOSWELL. "So you would think, Sir, were a beautiful tune to be uttered by one of those animals."—*J.* "No, Sir, it would be admired. We have seen fine fiddlers whom we liked as little as toads" (laughing).

LONDON.

"LONDON (said Johnson) is nothing to some people; but to a man whose pleasure is intellectual, London is the place. And there is no place where economy can be so well practised as in London. More can be had here for the money, even by ladies, than any where else. You cannot play tricks with your fortune in a small place; you must make an uniform appearance. Here a lady may have well-furnished apartments, and elegant dress, without any meat in her kitchen."

Mr. Boswell once expressing much regret at leaving London, where he had formed many agreeable connexions, "Sir (said Johnson), I don't wonder at it; no man fond of letters leaves London without regret. But remember, Sir, you have seen and enjoyed a great deal; you have seen life in its highest decorations, and the world has nothing new to exhibit.—No man is so well qualified to leave publick life as he who has long tried it, and known it well. We are always hankering after untried situations, and imagining greater felicity from them than they can afford. Sir, knowledge and virtue may be acquired in all countries."

Talking of the little attachment which subsist-

ed between near relations in London, " Sir (said Johnson), in a country so commercial as ours, where every man can do for himself, there is not so much occasion for that attachment. No man is thought the worse of here, whose brother was hanged. In commercial countries, many of the branches of a family must depend on the stock; so in order to make the head of the family take care of them, they are represented as connected with his reputation, that, self-love being interested, he may exert himself to promote their interest. You have first large circles or clans; as commerce increases, the connection is confined to families. By degrees that too goes off as having become unnecessary, and there being few opportunities of intercourse. One brother is a merchant in the city, and another is an officer in the guards. How little intercourse can these two have!"

On the state of the poor in London, Johnson said, " Saunders Welch, the Justice, who was once high constable of Holborn, and had the best opportunities of knowing the state of the poor, told me, that I under-rated the number, when I computed that twenty a week, that is above a thousand a year, died of hunger; not absolutely of immediate hunger, but of the wasting and other diseases which are the consequences of hunger. This happens only in so large a place

as London, where people are not known. What we are told about the great sums got by begging is not true; the trade is overstocked: and you may depend upon it, there are many who cannot get work. A particular kind of manufacture fails: those who have been used to work at it can, for some time, work at nothing else. You meet a man begging; you charge him with idleness: he says, 'I'm willing to labour. Will you give me work?'—'I cannot.'—'Why then you have no right to charge me with idleness.'"

Talking of living in the country, he said, "No wise man will go to live in the country, unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance; if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields, than to an opposite wall. Then if a man walks out in the country there is nobody to keep him from walking in again; but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is to be sure the school for studying life; and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes."—BOSWELL. "I fancy London is the best place for society; though I have heard that the very first society of Paris is still beyond any thing that we have here."—JOHNSON. "Sir, I question if in Paris such a company as is sitting round this table could be got together in less than half a year. They

talk in France of the felicity of men and women living together; the truth is, that there the men are not higher than the women, they know no more than the women do, and they are not held down in their conversation by the presence of women." Mr. Ramsay said, "Literature is upon the growth, it is in its spring in France; here it is rather *passée*."—*J.* "Literature was in France long before we had it. Paris was the second city for the revival of letters; Italy had it first, to be sure. What have we done for literature, equal to what was done by the Stephani and others in France? Our literature came to us through France. Caxton printed only two books, Chaucer and Gower, that were not translations from the French; and Chaucer we know took much from the Italians. No, Sir, if literature be in its spring in France, it is a second spring; it is after a winter. We are now before the French in literature; but we had it long after them."

Johnson was always much attached to London; he observed, that a man stored his mind better there than any where else; and that in remote situations a man's body might be feasted, but his mind was starved, and his faculties apt to degenerate, from want of exercise and competition. No place (he said) cured a man's vanity or arrogance so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with

others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the Metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors. He observed that a man in London was in less danger of falling in love indiscreetly, than any where else; for there the difficulty of deciding between the conflicting pretensions of a vast variety of objects kept him safe. He said, that he had frequently been offered country preferment if he would consent to take orders; but he could not leave the improved society of the capital, or consent to exchange the exhilarating joys and splendid decorations of public life, for the obscurity, insipidity, and uniformity of remote situations.

At another time he observed, "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists*."

* "I have often (says Mr. Boswell) amused myself with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They, whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium. A politician thinks of it merely as the seat of government in its different *departments*; a grazier as a vast market for cattle; a mercantile

ŒCONOMY.

On the subject of wealth, the proper use of it, and the effects of that art which is called œconomy, Johnson once observed, "It is wonderful to think how men of very large estates not only spend their yearly income, but are often actually in want of money. It is clear, they have not value for what they spend. Lord Shelburne told me, that a man of high rank, who looks into his own affairs, may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for five thousand pounds a year. Therefore a great proportion must go in waste; and indeed this is the case with most people, whatever their fortune is."—Boswell. "I have no doubt, Sir, of this; but how is it? What is waste?"—Johnson. "Why, Sir, breaking bottles and a thousand other things. Waste cannot

man, as a place where a prodigious deal of business is done upon 'Change; a dramatic enthusiast, as the grand scene of theatrical entertainments; a man of pleasure, as an assemblage of taverns, and the great emporium for ladies of easy virtue. But the intellectual man is struck with it, as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible."

be accurately told, though we are sensible how destructive it is. Œconomy on the one hand, by which a certain income is made to maintain a man genteelly, and waste on the other, by which, on the same income, another man lives shabbily, cannot be defined. It is a very nice thing; as one man wears his coat out much sooner than another, we cannot tell how."

On the right employment of wealth he remarked thus: "A man cannot make a bad use of his money so far as regards Society, if he does not hoard it; for if he either spends it, or lends it out, Society has the benefit. It is in general better to spend money than to give it away; for industry is more promoted by spending money than by giving it away. A man who spends his money is sure he is doing good with it; he is not so sure when he gives it away. A man who spends ten thousand a year will do more good than a man who spends two thousand, and gives away eight."

His Ofellus, in the 'Art of living in London,' he has been heard to relate, was an Irish painter, whom he knew at Birmingham, and who had practised his own precepts of œconomy for several years in the British capital. He assured Johnson, who perhaps was then meditating to try his fortune in London, but was apprehensive of the ex-

pence, " that thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible. He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen. He said a man might live in a garret at eighteen pence a week; few people would enquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, ' Sir, I am to be found at such a place.' By spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean shirt-day* he went abroad, and paid visits." Johnson would often talk of this frugal friend, whom he recollected with esteem and kindness, and did not like to have any one smile at the recital. " This man (said he gravely) was a very sensible man, who perfectly understood common affairs; a man of a great deal of knowledge of the world, fresh from life, not strained through books. He borrowed a horse and ten pounds at Birmingham. Finding himself master of so much money, he set off for West Chester, in order to get to Ireland. He returned the horse, and probably the ten pounds too, after he got home."

To Mr. Boswell Johnson once said, " Get as much force of mind as you can. Live within your income. Always have something saved at the end of the year. Let your imports be more

than your exports, and you'll never go far wrong."

A gentleman praised the accuracy of an account book of a lady whom he mentioned. Johnson said, "Keeping accounts, Sir, is of no use when a man is spending his own money, and has nobody to whom he is to account. You won't eat less beef to-day, because you have written down what it cost yesterday." Another lady was mentioned who thought as he did, so that her husband could not get her to keep an account of the expences of the family, as she thought it enough that she never exceeded the sum allowed her. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is fit she should keep an account, because her husband wishes it; but I do not see its use."—Mr. Boswell maintained, that keeping an account had this advantage, that it satisfied a man that his money had not been lost or stolen, which he might sometimes be apt to imagine, were there no written state of his expences; and besides that, a calculation of œconomy, so as not to exceed one's income, could not be made without a view of the different articles in figures, that one might see how to retrench in some particulars less necessary than others. This Johnson did not attempt to answer.

At another time speaking of œconomy he remarked, that it was hardly worth while to save anxiously twenty pounds a year. If a man could

save to such a degree as to enable him to assume a different rank in society, then, indeed, it might answer some purpose.

"I told him (says Mr. Boswell) that at a gentleman's house where there was thought to be such extravagance or bad management that he was living much beyond his income, his lady had objected to the cutting of a pickled mango, and that I had taken an opportunity to ask the price of it, and found it was only two shillings; so here was a very poor saving." "Sir (said Johnson), that is the blundering œconomy of a narrow understanding. It is stopping one hole in a sieve."

Talking of a penurious gentleman of his acquaintance, Johnson said, "He is narrow, not so much from avarice, as from impotence to spend his money. He cannot find in his heart to pour out a bottle of wine; but he would not much care if it should sour."

His friend Edward Cave * having been on some occasion mentioned, he said, "Cave used to sell ten thousand of 'The Gentleman's Magazine;' yet such was then his minute attention and anxiety that the sale should not suffer the smallest decrease, that he would name a particular person

* The original proprietor of The Gentleman's Magazine, in which Johnson was employed as a writer.

who be heard had talked of leaving off the Magazine, and would say, 'Let us have something good next month.'"

It was observed, that avarice was inherent in some dispositions. "No man (said Johnson) was born a miser, because no man was born to possession. Every man is born *cupidus*—desirous of getting; but not *avarus*—desirous of keeping."—Boswell. "I have heard old Mr. Sheridan maintain, with much ingenuity, that a complete miser is a happy man; a miser who gives himself wholly to the one passion of saving."—Johnson. "That is flying in the face of all the world, who have called an avaricious man *a miser*, because he is miserable. No, Sir; a man who spends and saves money is the happiest man, because he has both enjoyments."

The following account of the admirable system of domestic Œconomy adopted by Mr. Peregrine Langton, *was communicated by his Nephew* Mr. Bennet Langton *to* Mr. Boswell.

"The circumstances of *Mr Peregrine Langton* were these: He had an annuity for life of two hundred pounds per annum. He resided in a village in Lincolnshire; the rent of his house, with two or three small fields, was twenty-eight pounds; the county he lived in was not more than moderately cheap; his family consisted

of a sister, who paid him eighteen pounds annually for her board, and a niece. The servants were two maids, and two men in livery. His common way of living, at his own table, was three or four dishes; the appurtenances to his table were neat and handsome; he frequently entertained company at dinner, and then his table was well served with as many dishes as were usual at the tables of the other gentlemen in the neighbourhood. His own appearance, as to clothes, was genteelly neat and plain. He had always a post-chaise, and kept three horses.

"Such, with the resources I have mentioned, was his way of living, which he did not suffer to employ his whole income; for he had always a sum of money lying by him for any extraordinary expences that might arise. Some money he put into the stocks; at his death, the sum he had there amounted to one hundred and fifty pounds. He purchased out of his income his household furniture and linen, of which latter he had a very ample store; and as I am assured by those who had very good means of knowing, not less than the tenth part of his income was set apart for charity: at the time of his death, the sum of twenty-five pounds was found, with a direction to be employed in such uses.

"He had laid down a plan of living proportioned to his income, and did not practise any extraordinary degree of parsimony, but endeavoured that in his family there should be plenty without waste; as an instance that this was his endeavour, it may be worth while to mention a method he took in regulating a proper allowance of malt liquor to be drunk in his family, that there might not be a deficiency, nor any intemperate profusion: On a complaint made, that his allowance of a hogshead in a month was not enough for his own family, he ordered the quantity of a hogshead to be put into bottles, had it locked up from the servants, and distributed out, every day, eight quarts, which is the quantity each day at one hogshead in a month; and told his servants, that if that did not suffice, he would allow them more: but, by this method, it appeared at once that the allowance was much more than sufficient for his small family; and this proved a clear conviction, that could not be answered, and saved all future dispute. He was in

general very diligently and punctually attended and obeyed by his servants; he was very considerate as to the injunctions he gave, and explained them distinctly; and, at their first coming to his service, steadily exacted a close compliance with them, without any remission; and the servants, finding this to be the case, soon grew habitually accustomed to the practice of their business, and then very little further attention was necessary. On extraordinary instances of good behaviour or diligence, he was not wanting in particular encouragements and presents above their wages; it is remarkable that he would permit their relations to visit them, and stay at his house two or three days at a time.

"The wonder, with most that hear an account of his œconomy, will be how he was able, with such an income, to do so much, especially when it is considered that he paid for every thing he had. He had no land, except the two or three small fields which I have said he rented; and instead of gaining any thing by their produce, I have reason to think he lost by them; however, they furnished him with no further assistance towards his housekeeping, than grass for his horses (not hay, for that I know he bought), and for two cows. Every Monday morning he settled his family accounts, and so kept up a constant attention to the confining his expences within his income; and to do it more exactly, compared those expences with a computation he had made, how much that income would afford him every week and day of the year. One of his œconomical practices was, as soon as any repair was wanting in or about his house, to have it immediately performed. When he had money to spare, he chose to lay in a provision of linen or clothes, or any other necessaries; as then, he said, he could afford it, which he might not be so well able to do [illegible] the actual want came; in consequence of which method, he had a considerable supply of necessary articles lying by him, beside what was in use.

"But the main particular that seems to have enabled him to do so much with his income was, that he paid for [illegible]thing as soon as he had it, except, alone, what were current [illegible]nts, such as rent for his house and servants' wages; and these he paid at the stated times with the utmost exactness. He gave notice to the

tradesmen of the neighbouring market-towns, that they should no longer have his custom, if they let any of his servants have any thing without their paying for it. Thus he put it out of his power to commit those imprudences to which those are liable that defer their payments by using their money some other way than where it ought to go. And whatever money he had by him, he knew that it was not demanded elsewhere, but that he might safely employ it as he pleased.

"His example was confined, by the sequestered place of his abode, to the observation of few, though his prudence and virtue would have made it valuable to all who could have known it. These few particulars, which I knew myself, or have obtained from those who lived with him, may afford instruction, and may be an incentive to that wise art of living, which he so successfully practised."

TRADE.

TALKING of trade, Johnson observed, "It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into a nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come from commodities; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is a considerable profit in pleasure, as it gives to one nation the productions of another; as we have wines and fruits, and many other foreign articles, brought to us."—BOSWELL. "Yes, Sir, and there is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind."—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you cannot call

that pleasure to which all are averse, and which none begin but with the hope of leaving off; a thing which men dislike before they have tried it, and when they have tried it."—*B.* "But, Sir, the mind must be employed, and we grow weary when idle."—*J.* "That is, Sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were all idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another. There is, indeed, this in trade: it gives men an opportunity of improving their situation. If there were no trade, many who are poor would always remain poor; but no man loves labour for itself."—*B.* "Yes, Sir, I know a person who does. He is a very laborious Judge, and he loves the labour."—*J.* "Sir, that is because he loves respect and distinction. Could he have them without labour, he would like it less."—*B.* "He tells me he likes it for itself."—*J.* "Why, Sir, he fancies so, because he is not accustomed to abstract."

The company got into an argument whether the Judges who went to India might with propriety engage in trade. Johnson warmly maintained that they might. "For why (he urged) should not Judges get riches, as well as those who deserve them less?" Mr. Boswell said, they should have sufficient salaries, and have nothing to take off their attention from the affairs of the public. JOHNSON. "No Judge, Sir, can give

his whole attention to his office; and it is very proper that he should employ what time he has to himself, to his own advantage, in the most profitable manner."—"Then, Sir (said Mr. Davies, who enlivened the dispute by making it somewhat dramatic), he may become an insurer; and when he is going to the bench he may be stopped—'Your Lordship cannot go yet; here is a bunch of invoices; several ships are about to sail.'"—*J.* "Sir, you may as well say a Judge should not have a house; for they may come and tell him, 'Your Lordship's house is on fire;' and so, instead of minding the business of his court, he is to be occupied in getting the engine with the greatest speed. There is no end of this. Every Judge, who has land, trades to a certain extent in corn or in cattle; and in the land itself undoubtedly. His steward acts for him, and so do clerks for a great merchant. A Judge may be a farmer; but he is not to castrate his own pigs. A Judge may play a little at cards for his amusement; but he is not to play at marbles, or at chuck-farthing in the Piazza. No, Sir; there is no profession to which a man gives a very great proportion of his time. It is wonderful when a calculation is made, how little the mind is actually employed in the discharge of any profession. No man would be a Judge, upon the condition of being totally a Judge. The best employed lawyer has his mind

at work but for a small proportion of his time: a great deal of his occupation is merely mechanical. —I once wrote for a Magazine: I made a calculation, that if I should write but a page a day, at the same rate, I should in ten years write nine volumes in folio of an ordinary size and print."—BOSWELL. "Such as Carte's History?"—*J.* "Yes, Sir. When a man writes from his own mind, he writes very rapidly. The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book."

Mr. Boswell argued warmly against the Judges trading, and mentioned Hale as an instance of a perfect Judge, who devoted himself entirely to his office.—*J.* "Hale, Sir, attended to other things beside law: he left a great estate."—*B.* "That was, because what he got accumulated without any exertion and anxiety on his part."

Johnson at another time observed, that abilities might be employed in a narrow sphere, as in getting money, which he said he believed no man could do without vigorous parts, though concentrated to a point. RAMSAY. "Yes, like a strong horse in a mill; he pulls better."

Mr. Strahan talked of launching into the great ocean of London in order to have a chance for rising into eminence; and, observing that many *men were kept* back from trying their fortunes

there, because they were born to a competency, said, "Small certainties are the bane of men of talents;" which Johnson confirmed. Mr. Strahan put Johnson in mind of a remark which he had made to him; "There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money." "The more one thinks of this (said Strahan) the juster it will appear."

Talking of expence, Johnson observed with what munificence a great merchant will spend his money, both from his having it at command, and from his enlarged views by calculation of a good effect upon the whole. "Whereas (said he) you will hardly ever find a country gentleman who is not a good deal disconcerted at an unexpected occasion for his being obliged to lay out ten pounds."

Of an acquaintance whose manners and every thing about him, though expensive, were coarse, he said, "Sir, you see in him vulgar prosperity."

Upon a visit to Mr. Boswell at a country lodging near Twickenham, he asked what sort of society he had there. Mr. B. told him but indifferent; as they chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business. Johnson said, he never much liked that class of people; "For (said he) they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen."

Being once solicited to compose a funeral ser-

mon for the daughter of a tradesman, he naturally enquired into the character of the deceased; and being told she was remarkable for her humility and condescension to inferiors, he observed, that those were very laudable qualities, but it might not be so easy to discover who the lady's inferiors were.

He made the common remark on the unhappiness which men who have led a busy life experience when they retire in expectation of enjoying themselves at ease, and that they generally languish for want of their habitual occupation, and wish to return to it. He mentioned as strong an instance of this as can well be imagined. "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here, Sir, was a man, to whom the most disgusting circumstance in the business to which he had been used, was a relief from idleness *."

* The COMPILER has been informed of a living instance of the truth of this remark of Dr. Johnson's.

A tavern keeper in the neighbourhood of Holborn having saved *money enough* to retire from business, parted with his lease and

TRAVELLING.

JOHNSON once talked with uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of China. Mr. Boswell caught it for the moment, and said he really believed he should go and see the wall of China, had he not children, of whom it was his duty to take care.—"Sir (said Johnson), by doing so, you would do what will be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the wall of China. I am serious, Sir."

stock to his principal servant. Things went on well with the new proprietor, and for a short time the retired citizen endured the change; but *ennui* at length attacked him, and drove him to make very liberal offers to his successor to restore the concern. These, however, were refused: he then solicited to be admitted to a partnership; but this was not complied with. At length, so strong was the force of habit, he begged to be allowed to act as a waiter; in which occupation, it is said, he continues at the present day, in the very house where he acquired a fortune as master.

A journey to Italy was once in his thoughts. He said, "A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great Empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." It was observed, that 'THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem.'

He upon all occasions shewed an aversion to go to Ireland, where Mr. B. proposed to him that they should make a tour.—JOHNSON. "It is the last place where I should wish to travel."—BOSWELL. "Should you not like to see Dublin, Sir?" —*J.* "No Sir; Dublin is only a worse capital."—*B.* "Is not the Giant's Causeway worth seeing?" —*J.* "Worth seeing, yes; but not worth going to see."

Yet he had a kindness for the Irish nation, and thus generously expressed himself to a gentleman from that country, on the subject of an UNION, which artful politicians often had in view;—"Do not make an union with us, Sir. We should *unite with* you only to rob you.—We should have

robbed the Scotch, if they had had any thing of which we could have robbed them."

It was his opinion that the information we have from modern travellers is much more authentic than what we had from ancient travellers.—"Ancient travellers (said he) guessed; modern travellers measure. The Swiss admit that there is but one error in Stanyan. If Brydone were more attentive to his Bible, he would be a good traveller."

Mr. Boswell once asked him if modesty was not natural.—JOHNSON. "I cannot say, Sir, as we find no people quite in a state of nature;—but I think the more they are taught, the more modest they are. The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people; a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was, learning to be better satisfied with my own country. Time may be employed to more advantage from nineteen to twenty-four almost in any way than in travelling: when you set travelling against mere negation, against doing nothing, it is better, to be sure; but how much more would a young man improve were he to study during those years.—Indeed, if a young man is wild, and must run after women and bad company, it is better this should be done abroad, as, on his return, he can

break off such connections, and begin at home a new man, with a character to form, and acquaintances to make. How little does travelling supply to the conversation of any man who has travelled; how little to Beauclerk;"—*B.* "What say you to Lord ————?"—*J.* "I never but once heard him talk of what he had seen, and that was of a large serpent in one of the pyramids of Egypt."—*B.* "Well, I happened to hear him tell the same thing, which made me mention him."

Of a young female tourist, he said, "Miss Nancy has doubtless kept a constant and copious journal. Let her review her journal often, and set down what she knows herself to have omitted, that she may trust to memory as little as possible, for memory is soon confused by a quick succession of things; and she will grow every day less conscious of the truth of her own narratives unless she can recur to some written memorials. If she has satisfied herself with hints, instead of full representations, let her supply the deficiencies now, while her memory is yet fresh, and while her father's memory may help her. If she observes this direction, she will not have travelled in vain; for she will bring home a book with which she may entertain herself to the end of life. If it were not now too late, I would ad-

vise her to note the impression which the first sight of any thing new and wonderful made upon her mind. Let her now set her thoughts down as she can recollect them; for faint as they may already be, they will grow every day fainter."

One day dining at an excellent inn, he expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life.—"There is no private house (said he) in which people can enjoy themselves so well, as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that every body should be easy; in the nature of things it cannot be: there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him: and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No,

Sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn *". He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines:

" Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,
" Where'er his stages may have been,
" May sigh to think he still has found
" The warmest welcome at an inn."

* Sir John Hawkins (says Mr. B.) has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found, in his bulky tome, a very excellent one upon this subject. " In contradiction to those who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyment to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.*—' As soon (said he) as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude; when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight.' "

POLITICS.

JOHNSON arraigned the modern politics of this country, as entirely devoid of all principle of whatever kind.—" Politics (said he) are now nothing more than means of rising in the world. With this sole view do men engage in politics, and their whole conduct proceeds upon it. How different in that respect is the state of the nation now from what it was in the time of Charles the First, during the Usurpation, and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles the Second. Hudibras affords a strong proof how much hold political principles had then upon the minds of men. There is in Hudibras a great deal of bullion which will always last. But to be sure the brightest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters which was upon men's minds at the time; to their knowing them, at table and in the street: in short, being familiar with them: and above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared. The nation in general has ever been loyal, has been at all times attached to the monarch, though a few daring rebels have been wonderfully powerful for a time. The murder of Charles the First was undoubtedly not committed with the

approbation or consent of the people. Had that been the case, Parliament would not have ventured to consign the regicides to their deserved punishment. And we know what exuberance of joy there was when Charles the Second was restored. If Charles the Second had bent all his mind to it, had made it his sole object, he might have been as absolute as Louis the Fourteenth." A gentleman observed he would have done no harm if he had.—JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, absolute princes seldom do any harm. But they who are governed by them are governed by chance. There is no security for good government." Mr. Cambridge said, "There have been many sad victims to absolute government."—*J.* "So, Sir, have there been to popular factions."—*B.* "The question is, which is worst, one wild beast or many?"

Talking of different governments, Johnson said, "The more contracted a power is, the more easily it is destroyed. A country governed by a despot is an inverted cone. Government there cannot be so firm as when it rests upon a broad basis gradually contracted, as the Government of Great Britain, which is founded on the parliament, then is in the privy-council, then in the king."—BOSWELL. "Power when contracted into the person of a despot may be easily destroyed, as the prince may be cut off. So Ca*ligula* wished that the people of Rome had but

one neck, that he might cut them off at a blow." —GENERAL OGLETHORPE. "It was of the Senate he wished that. The Senate by its usurpation controuled both the emperor and the people."

At another time Johnson said, "The mode of government by one may be ill adapted to a small society, but is best for a great nation.—The characteristic of our own government at present is imbecility. The magistrate dare not call the guards for fear of being hanged.—The guards will not come, for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries *."

Patriotism having become one of the topics, Johnson suddenly uttered, in a strong determined tone, an apophthegm, at which many will start: —"Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." But let it be considered, that he did not mean a real and generous love of our country, but that pretended patriotism which so many, in all ages and countries, have made a cloak for self-interest. —"I maintained (says Mr. B.) that certainly all patriots were not scoundrels. Being urged (not by Johnson) to name one exception, I mentioned an eminent person, whom we all greatly admired."

* This was a just observation before the riots in 1780. Since that time the advantage of a vigorous government has been universally acknowledged.

—JOHNSON. "Sir, I do not say that he is *not* honest; but we have no reason to conclude, from his political conduct, that he *is* honest. Were he to accept of a place from this ministry, he would lose that character of firmness which he has, and might be turned out of his place in a year. This ministry is neither stable nor grateful to their friends, as Sir Robert Walpole was; so that he may think it more for his interest to take the chance of his party coming in."

He said, "Lord Chatham was a Dictator; he possessed the power of putting the State in motion; now there is no power, all order is relaxed."—BOSWELL. "Is there no hope of a change to the better?"—JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir, when we are weary of this relaxation. So the city of London will appoint its mayors again by seniority*."—*B.* "But is not that taking a mere chance for having a good or a bad mayor?" —*J.* "Yes, Sir; but the evil of competition is greater than that of the worst mayor that can come; besides, there is no more reason to suppose that the choice of a rabble will be right, than that chance will be right."

Of a person who differed from him in politics, he said, "In private life he is a very honest gen-

* City dissensions ran high at the time; and some Aldermen were put aside to elect others to the chair.

tleman; but I will not allow him to be so in public life. People *may* be honest, though they are doing wrong: that is between their Maker and them. But *we*, who are suffering by their pernicious conduct, are to destroy them. We are sure that ******** acts from interest. We know what his genuine principles were.—They who allow their passions to confound the distinctions between right and wrong are criminal. They may be convinced; but they have not come honestly by their conviction."

Talking of the accusation against a gentleman for supposed delinquencies in India, Johnson said, "What foundation there is for accusation I know not; but they will not get at him. Where bad actions are committed at so great a distance, a delinquent can obscure the evidence till the scent becomes cold; there is a cloud between, which cannot be penetrated;—therefore all distant power is bad. I am clear that the best plan for the government of India is a despotic governor; for if he be a good man, it is evidently the best government; and supposing him to be a bad man, it is better to have one plunderer than many. A governor whose power is checked lets others plunder, that he himself may be allowed to plunder; but if despotic, he sees that the more he lets others plunder, the less there will be for himself, so he restrains them; and though he

himself plunders, the country is a gainer, compared with being plundered by numbers."

Of the distinctions of Tory and Whig, he said, "A wise Tory and a wise Whig, I believe, will agree. Their principles are the same, though their modes of thinking are different. A high Tory makes Government unintelligible; it is lost in the clouds. A violent Whig makes it impracticable; he is for allowing so much liberty to every man, that there is not power enough to govern any man. The prejudice of the Tory is for establishment; the prejudice of the Whig is for innovation. A Tory does not wish to give more real power to Government, but that Government should have more reverence. Then they differ as to the Church. The Tory is not for giving more legal power to the Clergy, but wishes they should have a considerable influence, founded on the opinion of mankind; the Whig is for limiting and watching them with a narrow jealousy."

At a time when fears of an invasion were circulated, Mr. Spottiswoode observed, that Mr. Fraser the engineer, who had lately come from Dunkirk, said, that the French had the same fears of us. "It is thus (said Johnson) that mutual cowardice keeps us in peace. Were one half of mankind brave, and one half cowards, the brave would be always beating the cowards. Were

all brave, they would lead a very uneasy life; all would be continually fighting: but being all cowards, we go on very well."

Lord Graham commended Dr. Drummond at Naples, as a man of extraordinary talents;—and added, that he had a great love of liberty.—JOHNSON. "He is *young*, my Lord (looking to his Lordship with an arch smile); all *boys* love liberty, till experience convinces them that they are not so fit to govern themselves as they imagined. We are all agreed as to our own liberty: we would have as much of it as we can get; but we are not agreed as to the liberty of others; for in proportion as we take, others must lose. I believe we hardly wish that the mob should have liberty to govern us. When that was the case some time ago, no man was at liberty not to have candles in his windows."—RAMSAY. "The result is, that order is better than confusion."—*J.* "The result is, that order cannot be had but by subordination."

On another occasion, petitions being mentioned, he said, "This petitioning is a new mode of distressing government, and a mighty easy one. I will undertake to get petitions either against quarter guineas or half guineas, with the help of a little hot wine. There must be no yielding to encourage this. The object is not important

enough. We are not to blow up half a dozen palaces, because one cottage is burning."

He had great compassion for the miseries and distresses of the Irish nation, particularly the Papists; and severely reprobated the debilitating policy of the British government, which, he said, was the most detestable mode of persecution. To a gentleman, who hinted that such policy might be necessary to support the authority of the English government, he replied by saying, "Let the authority of the English government perish, rather than be maintained by iniquity. Better would it be to restrain the turbulence of the natives by the authority of the sword, and to make them amenable to law and justice by an effectual and vigorous police, than to grind them to powder by all manner of disabilities and incapacities. Better (said he) to hang or drown people at once, than by an unrelenting persecution to beggar and starve them."

"The notion of liberty (he observed) amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tædium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that his heart bleeds for his country, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling."

He said, he was glad Lord George Gordon had escaped, rather than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for *constructive*

treason; which he considered would be a dangerous engine of arbitrary power.

He would not admit the importance of the question concerning the legality of general warrants. "Such a power (he observed) must be vested in every government, to answer particular cases of necessity; and there can be no just complaint but when it is abused, for which those who administer government must be answerable. It is a matter of such indifference, a matter about which the people care so very little, that were a man to be sent over Britain, to offer them an exception from it for an halfpenny a piece, very few would purchase it." This perhaps was a specimen of that laxity of talking which he has often been heard fairly to acknowledge.

He said "The duration of Parliament, whether for seven years or the life of the King, appears to me so immaterial, that I would not give half a crown to turn the scale one way or the other. The *habeas corpus* is the single advantage which our government has over that of other countries."

Speaking of the national debt, he said, it was an idle dream to suppose that the country could sink under it. "Let the public creditors be ever so clamorous, the interest of millions must ever prevail over that of thousands."

To Mr. Boswell (who had thoughts of getting

into Parliament) he said, " You are entering upon a transaction which requires much prudence. You must endeavour to oppose without exasperating; to practise temporary hostility, without producing enemies for life.—This is, perhaps, hard to be done; yet it has been done by many, and seems most likely to be effected by opposing merely upon general principles, without descending to personal or particular censures or objections. One thing I must enjoin you, which is seldom observed in the conduct of elections. I must entreat you to be scrupulous in the use of strong liquors.—One night's drunkenness may defeat the labours of forty days well employed. Be firm, but not clamorous; be active, but not malicious; and you may form such an interest, as may not only exalt yourself, but dignify your family."

Lord Newhaven and Johnson carried on an argument for some time, concerning the Middlesex election. Johnson said, " Parliament may be considered as bound by law, as a man is bound where there is nobody to tie the knot. As it is clear that the House of Commons may expel, and expel again and again, why not allow of the power to incapacitate for that parliament, rather than have a perpetual contest kept up between Parliament and the People."—Lord Newhaven took the opposite side, but respectfully

said, "I speak with great deference to you, Dr. Johnson, I speak to be instructed." This had its full effect on the Doctor. He bowed his head almost as low as the table to a complimenting nobleman; and called out, "My Lord, my Lord, I do not desire all this ceremony; let us tell our minds to one another quietly." After the debate was over, he said, "I have got lights on the subject to-day which I had not before." This was a great deal from him, especially as he had written a pamphlet upon it.

He observed, "The House of Commons was originally not a privilege of the people, but a check for the crown on the House of Lords. I remember Henry the Eighth wanted them to do something: they hesitated in the morning, but did it in the afternoon. He told them, 'It is well you did; or half your heads should have been upon Temple Bar.' But the House of Commons is now no longer under the power of the crown, and therefore must be bribed."—He added, "I have no delight in talking of public affairs."

Mr. B. was once engaged as Counsel at the Bar of the House of Commons to oppose a road-bill in the county of Stirling, and asked Johnson what mode he would advise him to follow in addressing such an audience.—*J.* "Why, Sir, you must provide yourself with a good deal of extra-

neous matter, which you are to produce occasionally, so as to fill up the time; for you must consider, that they do not listen much.—If you begin with the strength of your cause, it may be lost before they begin to listen. When you catch a moment of attention, press the merits of the question upon them." He said, as to one point of the merits, that he thought "it would be a wrong thing to deprive the small landholders of the privilege of assessing themselves for making and repairing the high roads; *it was destroying so much liberty, without a good reason, which was always a bad thing.*" When Mr. B. mentioned this observation next day to Mr. Wilkes, he pleasantly said, "What! does *he* talk of liberty? *Liberty* is as ridiculous in *his* mouth as *Religion* in *mine.*" Mr. Wilkes's advice, as to the best mode of speaking at the bar of the House of Commons, was not more respectful towards the Senate, than that of Dr. Johnson. "Be as impudent as you can, as merry as you can, and say whatever comes uppermost. Jack Lee is the best heard there of any Counsel; and he is the most impudent dog, and always abusing us." Mr. Boswell censured the coarse invectives which were become fashionable in the House of Commons, and said, that if members of parliament must attack each other personally in the heat of *debate, it* should be done more genteelly.—*J.*

"No, Sir; that would be much worse. Abuse is not so dangerous when there is no vehicle of wit or delicacy, no subtle conveyance. The difference between coarse and refined abuse is as the difference between being bruised by a club, and wounded by a poisoned arrow. This position is elegantly expressed by Dr. Young.

'As the soft plume gives swiftness to the dart,
'Good breeding sends the satire to the heart."

A gentleman observed to a Member of Parliament, "Mr. E. I don't mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it."—*E.* "Waving your compliment to me, I shall say in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to take pains to speak well in parliament. A man who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote is gained, a good speech has its effect.—Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet in its progress it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we see plainly the minister

has been told, that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity from what they have heard, that it must be altered."—JOHNSON. "And, Sir, there is a gratification of pride.—Though we cannot out-vote them we will out-argue them. They shall not do wrong without its being shewn both to themselves and to the world."—*E.* "The House of Commons is a mixed body (I except the minority, which I hold to be pure [smiling]; but I take the whole House). It is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is a large proportion of corruption in it. There are many members who generally go with the minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence."—*J.* "We are all more or less governed by interest. But interest will not make us do every thing. In a case which admits of doubt, we try to think on the side which is for our interest, and generally bring ourselves to act accordingly. But the subject must admit of diversity of colouring, it must receive a colour on that side. In the House of Commons there are members enough who will not vote what is grossly unjust or absurd. No, Sir, there must always be right enough, or ap-

pearance of right, to keep wrong in countenance."—BOSWELL. "There is surely always a majority in parliament who have places, or who want to have them, and who therefore will be generally ready to support government without requiring any pretext."—*E.* "True, Sir; that majority will always follow

'*Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.*"—

B. "Well now, let us take the common phrase, Place-hunters. I thought they had hunted without regard to any thing, just as their huntsman, the minister, leads, looking only to the prey."—*J.* "But, taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting there are few so desperately keen as to follow without reserve. Some do not choose to leap ditches and hedges and risk their necks, or gallop over steeps, or even to dirty themselves in bogs and mire."—*B.* "I am glad there are some good, quiet, moderate, political hunters."—*E.* "I believe in any body of men in England I should have been in the minority; I have always been in the minority."—A gentleman present said, "The House of Commons resembles a private company. How seldom is any man convinced by another's argument! passion and pride rise against it."—Another asked, "What would be the consequence, if a Minister, sure of a majority in the

House of Commons, should resolve that there should be no speaking at all upon his side."—*E.* "He must soon go out. That has been tried; but it was found it would not do."

Russia being mentioned as likely to become a great empire, by the rapid increase of population, Johnson said, "Why, Sir, I see no prospect of their propagating more. They can have no more children than they can get. I know of no way to make them breed more than they do. It is not from reason and prudence that people marry, but from inclination. A man is poor; he thinks, 'I cannot be worse, and so I'll e'en take Peggy.'" —*B.* "But have not nations been more populous at one period than another?"—*J.* "Yes, Sir; but that has been owing to the people being less thinned at one period than another, whether by emigrations, war, or pestilence, not by their being more or less prolific. Births at all times bear the same proportion to the same number of people."—*B.* "But, to consider the state of our country; does not throwing a number of farms into one hand hurt population?"—*J.* "Why no, Sir; the same quantity of food being produced, will be consumed by the same number of mouths, though the people may be disposed of in different ways. We see, if corn be dear, and butchers' meat cheap, the farmers all apply themselves to the raising of corn, till it becomes plentiful and

cheap, and then butchers' meat becomes dear; so that an equality is always preserved. No, Sir, let fanciful men do as they will, depend upon it, it is difficult to disturb the system of life."—*B.* "But, Sir, is it not a very bad thing for landlords to oppress their tenants, by raising their rents?" —*J.* "Very bad. But, Sir, it never can have any general influence; it may distress some individuals. For, consider this: landlords cannot do without tenants. Now tenants will not give more for land than land is worth. If they can make more of their money by keeping a shop, or any other way, they'll do it, and so oblige landlords to let land come back to a reasonable rent, in order that they may get tenants. Land, in England, is an article of commerce. A tenant who pays his landlord his rent, thinks himself no more obliged to him than you think yourself obliged to a man in whose shop you buy a piece of goods. He knows the landlord does not let him have his land for less than he can get from others, in the same manner as the shop-keeper sells his goods. No shopkeeper sells a yard of ribband for sixpence when sevenpence is the current price."—*B.* "But, Sir, is it not better that tenants should be dependent on landlords?"—*J.* "Why, Sir, as there are many more tenants than landlords, perhaps, strictly speaking, we should wish not. But if you please you may let

your lands cheap, and so get the value, part in money and part in homage. I should agree with you in that."—*B.* "So, Sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement."—*J.* "Why, Sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things."

He strongly censured the licensed stews at Rome. Mr. Boswell said, "So then, Sir, you would allow of no irregular intercourse whatever between the sexes."—JOHNSON. "To be sure I would not, Sir. I would punish it much more than it is done, and so restrain it. In all countries there has been fornication, as in all countries there has been theft; but there may be more or less of the one, as well as of the other, in proportion to the force of law. All men will naturally commit fornication, as all men will naturally steal. And, Sir, it is very absurd to argue, as has been often done, that prostitutes are necessary to prevent the violent effects of appetite from violating the decent order of life; nay, should be permitted, in order to preserve the chastity of our wives and daughters. Depend upon it, Sir, severe laws, steadily enforced, would be sufficient against those evils, and would promote marriage."

On another occasion Johnson said, "It may be questioned, whether there is not some mistake as to the methods of employing the poor, seem-

ingly on a supposition that there is a certain portion of work left undone for want of persons to do it; but if that is otherwise, and all the materials we have are actually worked up, or all the manufactures we can use or dispose of are already executed, then what is given to the poor who are to be set at work must be taken from some who now have it; as time must be taken for learning, according to Sir William Petty's observation, a certain part of those very materials that, as it is, are properly worked up, must be spoiled by the unskilfulness of novices. We may apply to well-meaning, but misjudging persons in particulars of this nature, what Giannone said to a monk, who wanted what he called to *convert* him; '*Tu sei Santo, ma Tu non sei Filosofo.*'—It is an unhappy circumstance, that one might give away five hundred pounds in a year to those that importune in the streets, and not do any good."

He said, the poor in England were better provided for than in any other country of the same extent; he did not mean little Cantons or petty Republics. "Where a great proportion of the people (said he) are suffered to languish in helpless misery, that country must be ill policed, and wretchedly governed; a decent provision for the poor, is the true test of civilization. Gentlemen of education, he observed, were pretty much the

same in all countries; the condition of the lower orders, the poor especially, was the true mark of national discrimination."

"Raising the wages of day-labourers (said he) is wrong; for it does not make them live better, but only makes them idler, and idleness is a very bad thing for human nature."

Observing some beggars in the street, a gentleman remarked, that there was no civilized country in the world, where the misery of want in the lowest classes of the people was prevented.—JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, there is not; but it is better that some should be unhappy, than that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality."

"At dinner one day at Mr. Hoole's with Dr. Johnson (says Mr. Boswell), when Mr. Nicol, the King's bookseller, and I, attempted to controvert the maxim, 'better that ten guilty should escape, than one innocent person suffer;' we were answered by Dr. Johnson with great power of reasoning and eloquence. He ably shewed, that unless civil institutions insured protection to the innocent, all the confidence which mankind should have in them would be lost."

Talking on the subject of Toleration, one day when some friends were with him in his study, he made a remark, that the State has a right to regulate the religion of the people, who are the chil-

dren of the State. A clergyman having readily acquiesced in this, Johnson, who loved discussion, observed, "But, Sir, you must go round to other States than our own. You do not know what a Bramin has to say for himself. In short, Sir, I have got no further than this: Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test."

At another time, when in a literary conversation at Mr. Dilly's one of the company introduced the subject of toleration, Johnson said, "Every Society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *Society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right."—Dr. Mayo. "I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right."—Johnson. "Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay with liberty of preaching. Every

man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks; but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks."—*M.* "Then, Sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians."—*J.* "Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth, but by persecution on the one hand, and enduring it on the other."—GOLDSMITH. "But how is a man to act, Sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?"—*J.* "Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach, for five-pence a day."—*G.* "But have *they a moral* right to do this?"—*J.* "Nay, Sir,

if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from Heaven."—*G.* "I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I should pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signior to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet."—*J.* "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as 'thou shall not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner, it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to christianity; but no man in the common

course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said, that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from Heaven."—*G.* "How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Chrish—" *J.* (interrupting him), "Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, Sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred; as many of them ran away as could."—BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there was your countryman, Elwal, who you told me once challenged King George with his black-guards, and his red-guards."—*J.* "My countryman, Elwal, Sir, should have been put in the stocks; a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough."—*B.* "But Elwal thought himself in the right."—*J.* "We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood." (meaning Moorfields.)—*M.* "But, Sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?"—*J.* "Why, Sir, you might contrive to teach your *children extra scandalum;* but, Sir, the magis-

trate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?"—*M.* "This is making a joke of the subject."—*J.* "Nay, Sir, take it thus: that you teach them the community of goods, for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them, that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to any thing but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, Sir, you sap a great principle in society—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked in the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog them into their doublets?"—*M.* "I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act."—*B.* "So, Sir, though he sees an enemy to the State charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off."—*M.* "He must be sure of its direction against the state."—*J.* "The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centers in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness

as a parent. Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged."—*M.* "But, Sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?"—*J.* "I have already told you so, Sir. You are coming back where you were."—*B.* "Dr. Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half price."—*J.* "Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words*. Sir, it is no matter, politically,

* Dr. Mayo's calm temper and steady perseverance, Mr. Boswell tells us, rendered him an admirable subject for the exercise of Dr. Johnson's powerful abilities. He never flinched; but, after reiterated blows, remained seemingly unmoved as at the first. The scintillations of Johnson's genius flashed every time he was struck, without his receiving any injury. Hence he obtained the epithet of THE LITERARY ANVIL.

whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third: this would be very bad with respect to the State; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains, that the magistrate should 'tolerate all things that are tolerable.' This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shews that he thought some things were not tolerable."—TOPLADY. "Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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